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Number 60
AUGUST 1996

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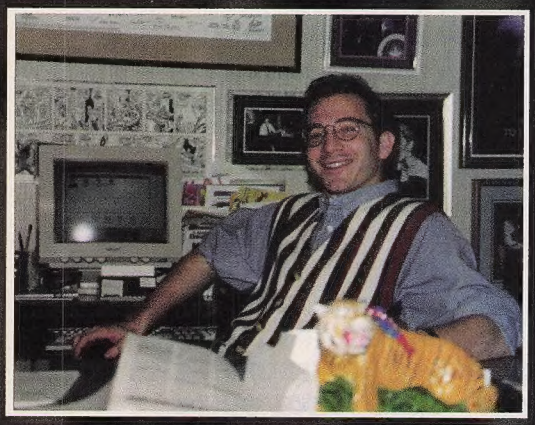
Mwwrrrrow! Here's your only chance to get the scorchin' Lady Death: The Crucible #1/2 comic, which is the OFFICIAL prelude to Chaos! Comics' upcoming Lady Death: The Crucible mini-series. Hot stuff!



GRADUATION DAY

You've heard the same old speech at a high school or college graduation—"This is not the end, but just the beginning." Well, I feel like *Wizard* just graduated (on the five-year plan, of course). We've got a whole lot of new stuff planned for the next five years and beyond, as well as more of everything we already do.

This month, to celebrate our Five-Year Anniversary, we have the Queen of all #1/2 offers—*Lady Death: The Crucible* #1/2, the King of all chromium cards—a two-sided Spawn chromium card, and the Jack of all covers—Bart Sears' Hulk with a fist the size of my head. There's also lots more stories and cool things to look at than usual, including how an issue of *Wizard* is made—we let out a lot of secrets here! Check out our special anniversary editorial, a look at the last five years in comics and our predictions for the next five years. You won't believe some of the stuff that's gonna happen.

If you liked the Alex Ross *Kingdom Come* sketchbook that appeared in issue #57, then you'll love the Jim Lee/Rob Liefeld sketchbook for "Heroes Reborn" in this issue. Check out their designs for Iron Man, Captain America, the Fantastic Four and the Avengers. You'll also find a Jim Lee Batman poster inside this issue.

Make sure to read our picks for the 100 comics you gotta own; this list is something you're gonna want to hang on to. And with a sneak peek at the "Spawn" animated series, an interview with Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras and our summer reading guide previewing some of the industry's hottest books, this is an issue like no other.

Recently, we've had a lot of publishers—Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti of Event and Billy Tucci of Crusade, among others—stop by the office to brief us on their plans. And boy, they've got some really cool stuff coming out. I think publishers really got the hint—good books sell well. So you'll see a lot more good books coming your way.

And remember, I'll be at the big shows this year—The San Diego Comic Con, Dragon Con and at the *Magic: The Gathering* Pro Tour events—so make sure you stop by and say hello to me or anyone from *Wizard*. We'd love to see you.

Until our 61st issue comes out, I'll be online.

See ya,

Gareb S. Shamus

P.S. For those of you not visiting "Wizard World" on America Online, get up to speed. You're missing out on cool clubs, talking directly to top pros and downloading never-before-seen photos.

P.P.S. How could I forget? Thanks to the great staff and contributors for putting out such a fun magazine.

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SOUND BITES

"DOUBLE-COVERS, BAGGING AND OTHER GIMMICKS SEEM TO HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON SALES."
—*John Davis, Capital Cities Distributors (Wizard #1, September 1991)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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EXTREME™ STUDIOS

MASTHEAD(s)

Pat McCallum
Editor-in-Chief

Pat's job as editor-in-chief is to run the show, maintain the "feel" of Wizard Press' publications and is in charge of the magazine's pure content. Pretty much everything we do in the magazine—from columns and features to trading cards and the polybag—runs through him in one way or another.

The only thing he works harder at is staying happily anonymous. He is truly the mysterious "masked wrestler" in the comic book wrestling ring of life.

Brian Cunningham
Editor

Brian is primarily responsible for the actual wordly content of the magazine. When articles roll in, Bri gives 'em a once-over to see if they pass muster. He is an astute observer of just what an article needs to be good.

Brian is incapable of getting a tan. He is either pastier than your average Englishwoman or burned redder than a migrant worker workin' 14 hours in the San Fernando Valley after shlepping lettuce. Never anything in-between.

Joe Yanarella
Senior Managing Editor

Joe handles most of the traffic aspects of creating *Wizard*. As our in-house cop, he makes sure things move smoothly from writing to editing to design to proofing to the printing plant, ensuring that there is an issue of *Wizard* every month. He also sets up most of our covers and is a key contributor editorially.

When on the comic convention circuit, Joe takes on a completely new evil persona known as Convention Joe. Normal Joe (or "Conventional Joe," as we put it) says things like, "Put it in writing, send it to me and I'll review it." Convention Joe says stuff like, "If you're looking for trouble, I got the map."

Scott Gramling
Managing Editor

Scott is our main freelance liaison. Most things you see written in our mags are arranged by Scott. He sets deadlines and keeps in contact with our vast and far-flung freelancer staff making sure that all the editorial we get comes from a variety of sources, we get the full story and we get it in on time.

Perhaps our most flatulent staffer, a quote that sums up Scott the best: "I never met a fart I didn't respect." Scott's the kind of guy who beat up comic fans and took their milk money when he was younger. We live in fear of him.

Marc Wilkofsky
Contributing Editor

Wilko is the master of the *AP Stylebook* and chief slinger of red ink 'round these parts (read: proofreader). He makes sure that all our text is consistent with accepted editorial guidelines and looks up whether he should use a colon or a semi-colon.

Marc is an anomaly. Nothing we say can do him justice. Much like Roswell, the Bermuda Triangle and the advertising campaign behind the Arch Deluxe, he is a phenomenon unto himself.

Andrew Kardon
Copy Editor

Andrew works with Brian to make sure feature editorial is up to snuff, as well as doing his fair share of red-ink slingin' during copy editing time. He also chips in for stuff like Top 10 lists, captions in the card price guide and numerous news stories.

Whenever you read a Twisted Sister (Go, Dee!), "Dukes of Hazzard" or "What's Happening!!" (No Roger, No Rerun, No rent!) reference in *Wizard*, it's Andrew's doing. We'll probably fire him soon.

Stephen Shamus
Price Guide Director

Stephen's the head of the Wizard Press price guide department. Be it comics, cards, toys, CCGs, bisques (read: statues with a fancy French name), Steve's the man.

Steve puts lots of gel crap in his hair. So much so that his head somewhat resembles a giant caramel apple. He's also Gareb's li'l brother, so we don't get to beat on him as much as we'd like to.

Jon Warren
Senior Price Guide Editor

Jon does most of the number-crunching for our price guides, contacting retailers across this great nation, attending conventions, compiling surveys and making sure that the *Cry For Dawn #6* signed-and-numbered edition is really worth $51 and not $50!

Whenever Tennessee-based Jon gets tanked up on moonshine, he likes to stuff cows full of gunpowder and "shoot the bull." Jon's available for weddings and Bar Mitzvahs.

Bob Marshall
Price Guide Editor

Bob is the workhorse of Price Guide Central or, as sportscaster Keith Jackson might call him, the bell cow. Once all the numbers are determined, Bob actually inputs them and cranks out the survey forms for the next issue. He also coordinates our "Staff Picks" section in the comic book price guide.

As far as we can tell, Bob is an unholy servant of Satan. That being the case, we're not taking any chances by making fun of him. On to the next *Wizard* staffer...

Phil Colligan
Assistant Price Guide Editor

Phil is Dan Reilly's right-hand man. Whenever we need something to make *Wizard*, be it comics, books, magazines, toys or hookers, Phil's the lad who'll dig it up. He also helps run our library and assists Bob with the price guide surveys.

Whenever Phil gets flustered or excited, a big vein sticks out of his forehead and begins pulsating like something out of a John Carpenter movie. Weird.

SOUND BITES

"THERE'S ONLY SO MANY TIMES YOU CAN FLUSH YOUR CAREER DOWN THE TOILET AND EXPECT TO COME BACK AND FIND AN AUDIENCE."
—*Paul Smith (Wizard #50, October 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Steve Blackwell
Design Manager

Steve heads up our design department and is ultimately responsible for the way everything associated with *Wizard* looks. Subscription cards, #1/2 offer envelopes, pages of the mag—Steve either does it himself or farms it out to the appropriate person.

Steve has great hair but only one eyebrow. It's kind of distracting, but it adds to his overall hair-presence.

Arlene So
Designer

Arlene is Steve's right-hand woman and designs most of *Wizard*'s columns and departments. She also gets her two cents' worth in on the design of the occasional #1/2 offer certificate, *Wizard* house ad and trading card.

Arlene really likes pigs. Not the kind that work here at *Wizard*, but the kind that are slaughtered and served at breakfast. Arlene prefers them alive. Her last name is also just two letters long. Just two letters. That's so messed-up.

Dan Reilly
Art Assistant

Dan is our resident Indiana Jones. He's in charge of the Wizard Press research department, meaning he's the guy who digs up ALL of the art you see in any Wizard Press anything. With his faithful ward Phil at his side, there is no vegetable, animal or idol that Dan can't get in 24 hours.

True story: Dan tore his anterior cruciate (ligament behind his knee) and it was replaced by one from a corpse. While we now consider Dan a patchwork abomination, we still let him work here.

Jennifer Cavallo
Administrative Assistant

Jen is the staff's Miss Moneypenny. She actually runs the joint, pretending she just assists us in sending out freelance contracts, returning phone calls and coordinating all our meetings. (She probably won't let this see print as this would expose her for who she really is.)

With the exception of a tan that would put George Hamilton to shame, Jen's the spitting image of one of them gals from a Robert Palmer video. She also collects Smurfs. (It's all part of her cover.)

Gareb Shamus
President/Publisher

Gareb is the guy who signs the checks, which makes him kinda important, at least every payday. As head-goof-in-charge, Gareb's main function is acting as an ambassador to all our professional contacts, making sure our relationships with the outside world run smoothly. When we piss someone off, he tries to make it all better.

Gareb likes to drop names. If you meet him in a dark alley and he starts talking about Tom Cruise or somebody, nod politely, agree with what he's saying and get the hell out of there.

GUILTY PARTIES

Salt of the Earth Patrick McCallum
Light Mayonnaise Brian Cunningham
Honey Mustard Joe Yanarella
Chunky Picante Sauce Scott Gramling
Spicy Ranch Dressing Patrick Daniel O'Neill and Marc Wilkofsky
Secret Sauce Andrew Kardon
Cilantro Stephen Shamus
Cream 'n' Sugar Jon Warren
Wasabi Bob Marshall
Big Steak Flavor Phil Colligan
Olive Oil William A. Christensen & Mark Seifert
Cinnamon Jennifer Cavallo

No-Fat Cooking Spray Steve Blackwell
Thousand Island Dressing Arlene So
Horseradish Fernando Colón, Chris Duncan, Ryan Dunlavey, Laurie Strauss, Voltage Design Co.
Monosodium Glutamate Daniel Reilly
Best Member of the Jackson Five Tito

Allspice
Brian Douglas Ahern, Dan Albaugh, Rob Allstetter, Scott Beatty, Sorrell Booke, David Borak, Matt Brady, Jack Curtin, Mikey "The Knife" Fasolo, Paul J. Grant, Chris Griffen, Glenn Haight, Carl Horn, Craig Kostelecky, John B. Lacey, Greg McElhatton, Ruth Morrison, Tom Palmer Jr., Benny Powell, Joe Quesada, Michael Searle, Marc Shapiro, Craig Shutt, Dean Simakis, Joyce Steel

Hulk Cover Art Bart Sears, colored by Twilight Graphics Inc.

Wizard Press
Grating Cheese Gareb S. Shamus
Pickle Relish Fred Pierce
Hollandaise Sauce Edward L. DuPré
Paprika Martha Scheidegger
Sauerkraut Douglas Goldstein
Crisco Jim McLauchlin
Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme Kathy Newman
Oregano Maria Capello
Duck Sauce Paul Rolnick
Bay Leaves Kate Torpey
Maraschino Cherry Jen Winheim
Curry Powder Raka Raychaudhuri
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Stuff you don't ever read...

WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS, volume one, sixty (60), August 1996.

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MAGIC WORDS

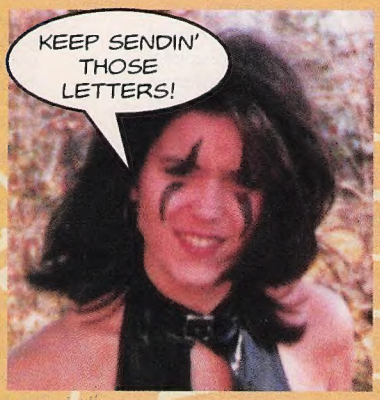
The Letters, They are a Changin'

As you're well aware of by the time you've arrived here on page six, *Wizard* is 5 years old today. And as I've just become aware, after doing a little simple math, I've been here on "Magic Words" for about the last half of those five years. In that time, many things have changed in the letters.

We now get very few "Who is the X-Traitor?" letters and even fewer "Iron Man vs. X-Men" letters. We still get a fair amount of "How do they cram in all that graham?" letters (a mystery I'll never solve), and people *still* ask how many licks it takes to get to the Tootsie Roll center of a Tootsie Pop, even though both the Wise Old Owl and I have told them innumerable times. (It's THREE, hot dammit! Three!)

One thing I like is that I'm seeing letters on a wider variety of topics than ever before, which shows me that you, our audience, are dynamic. You're not afraid of trying something new. Just this month, I've seen letters on titles as diverse as *Slapstick, Weapon Zero, Witchblade, Untold Tales of Spider-Man, Sailor Moon, Savage Dragon, Araknis, Milk and Cheese,* and *Egypt.* How's that for variety? It's very gratifying to see that you read a lot of different stuff, which makes for a lot of different letters and a very interesting letters column. I'd like to take this opportunity on this anniversary occasion to say, "Thanks a lot." Without cool letters from you, we'd have a pretty drab column. With these letters, I think we've got the most ass-whippin' comic forum going. So give yourself a pat on the back and keep up the good work. I do appreciate it.

Enough of that babble. Now here's something we're sure you'll enjoy: A photo of that Paula girl.



Dear Jim,

Thanks for running my letter, address and picture of me in my homemade Razor costume in *Wizard* #56. The response I've been getting is great. Thought you might like to know what kind of response came in through the first six weeks, so here you go:

Total letters: **571**
Letters from males: **565**
Letters from females: **6**
Letter writers who said they were not "geeks": **549**
Letters from prisoners: **3**
Letters from servicemen: **14**
Letters from outside the U.S.: **37**
Letter writers who thought that I was the real Razor model: **2**
Letter writers who sent in photographs of themselves: **41**
Letter writers who sent in artwork: **16**
Letter writers who appeared to be real psychos: **5**
Letter writers who made sexual references: **7**

The majority of people (about 90%) asked me for more pictures of myself, and I am still receiving about 10 to 20 pieces of mail a day.

It's been fun so far! Please feel free to run my address again, along with one of the new photos I've enclosed. Tell everyone they can keep writing, although I can't promise a personal response. Oh, yeah—and tell those five psychos not to bother writing at all.

Paula
P.O. Box 53304
Indianapolis, IN 46253-0304

Geez, a mere 96 percent of the people who wrote to you felt a need to explicitly state that they weren't geeks? Methinks they doth protest too much.

But that's quite the response there. Heck, those numbers are about the same or (gulp!) slightly higher than the ones we get for "Magic Words." Whatchoo tryin' to do? Horn in on my territory? You'd best watch your step, missy!

Dear Jim,

For a while, *Amazing Spider-Man* was written by a great writer named David Michelinie. I can't find anything he is doing now. Where is he writing?

Alvin Northern
Brooklyn, NY
Griftter@aol.com

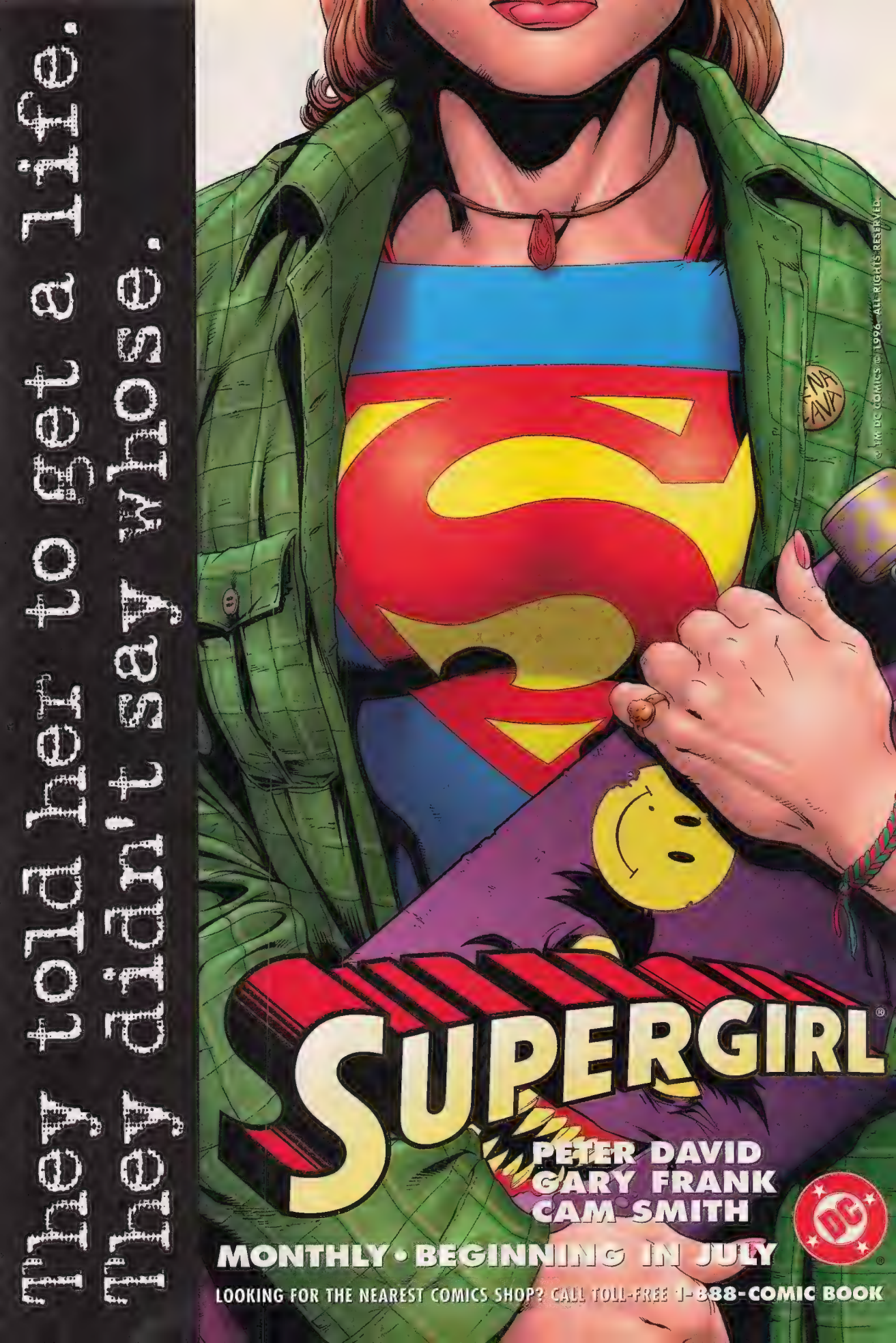
These days, Michelinie's only regular monthly assignment is* Action Comics *for DC. He's also writing this year's* Superman Annual *and a Superman story for a 1996 holiday special issue. If you like David's old Spidey stuff, you'll also want to check out his killer runs on* Iron Man *from issues #116-#156 and from #217-#250.

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS

SOUND BITES

"UNFORTUNATELY, ONCE I LEAVE *SPIDER-MAN*, I DOUBT I'LL DO MONTHLY COMIC BOOKS AGAIN."
—*Todd McFarlane (Wizard #1, September 1991)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...


They told her to get a life.
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Dear Wizard,

They say the comics industry is in a slump. Here's my observation:

There appears to be a problem selling books. New readers are not coming in and older fans are not buying the comic books they once followed so closely.

The solution that many companies come up with is gimmicks. Although I'm displeased with this approach, who am I to argue? If it were up to me, I would suggest lowering prices, producing good books on time and forgetting the damn gimmicks.

The lowest-priced comic on the shelf at the local comic store, all in color and under a buck, is *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*. Since I am not a professional publisher, I am curious as to how Marvel can cut a cheaper deal than any other publisher. Did they save money by getting poor talent? Let's examine the creative team: Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe, Al Milgrom, Al Vey and Ron Frenz handle the chores. All are experienced veterans, all are good creators. What's it missing? No foil, no enhanced cover, and the paper is not high-gloss.

I remember what makes me buy comics. It isn't the paper or an enhanced cover. It's the integrity of the book, the characters and the creators. Why don't more publishers try to approach comics like Marvel approaches *Untold Tales of Spider-Man?*

James Rugg
Indiana, PA

Indiana, Pennsylvania? Didn't we just have a California, Pa., a couple of months ago? Lotta states in that state.

I wholeheartedly agree.* Untold Tales of Spider-Man *just might be, penny for penny, the best damed comic on the shelves today. But why don't more publishers approach comics in this low-price, quality-story, no-gimmick fashion? Because we haven't told them yet with our wallets. Quit buying three different variant cover versions of* JuggsWoman *#1 and start reading* Untold Tales of Spider-Man. *Sooner or later, the good stuff will win out and even comic publishers will get the message.

By the way, it looks like Marvel is starting to get the message. Several of the company's old $1.95 titles are now $1.50, and some $1.95s have been bulked up to 40 pages. Good news, huh?

Jim,

I have a very simple question: Why is it that I can never find back issues of good comics such as *Madman, Milk and Cheese, Concrete, Scud: The Disposable Assassin* or pre-Image *Bone?* What I find instead are piles of garbage filling the places where these comics should be—appalling T&A "Bad Girl" garbage or over-violent "heroes" who blow people's brains out with guns the size of a Buick.

The comic industry has forgotten that comics are supposed to be funny, or at least entertaining. If I want "Bad Girls" or porn or extreme violence, I'll look elsewhere. Comics are supposed to be fun.

Sawyer Williams
Albany, NY
Azbats13@aol.com

See the above letter and see what wins out. The reason you can't find the back issues that you mentioned is that they're all good stuff, and the good stuff gets bought once and stays in someone's collection. It ain't for sale, 'cause no one wants to sell it. For more discussion similar to this, see Marc Hempel's editorial in* TUG & buster *#3, probably not available at a comic store near you 'cause it's good stuff and it sold out.

Dear Wizard,

Where can I get *Scud* back issues? I picked up issue #10 and loved it! Is there a number I can call for a subscription or something?

Rod Jaroltz
White Bear Lake, MN

All issues of* Scud *are kept in print and should be available from your local comic store by special order. If you can't get them at your local store, try direct from the publisher. For a catalog, write Fireman Press at: 2430 North Humboldt Blvd., Milwaukee, WI 53212.

***And check out our keen-as-beans feature on Scud in this very issue of* Wizard!**

THE BUNNY AWARD

Paul Schiraldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

Wizard,

What kind of cologne does Dan Jurgens wear?

Simeon Hendrix
Iowa Park, TX
Azori@aol.com

Y'know, I've often wondered what the sweet-smelling* Superman *writer wears, but I've always been too afraid to ask. So now I get my chance. Dan said, "It's Hal Karate. It hasn't been around since about 1978. But when the company that made it was about to go out of business, I bought several crates direct from the manufacturer. I've been lucky enough to have it ever since!"

And here I was, expecting a simple "Old Spice."

Dear Wizard,

Did they ever make Space Ghost comics? As a longtime fan witnessing his current rise to fame through "Space Ghost: Coast to Coast," I'm wondering if I can get any comics that involve the mighty Ghost.

Blair Hicks
San Antonio, TX
AHicks1957@aol.com

Surprisingly, there have been very few comics made of this Alex Toth-created cartoon character. Our research turned up only a pair of books: a Gold Key Comics one-shot that came out in 1967 and a Comico one-shot with art by Steve "The Dude" Rude that appeared in 1987. Any additions to this list that anyone knows of would be greatly appreciated. Pass 'em along.

Dear Wizard,

Please supply me with an address or any information about Graphitti Designs, the people who sell comic T-shirts and porcelain statues

SOUND BITES

"YEAH, WELL, I LIKE DRAWING BIG NAKED PEOPLE WITH BIG LUMPS OF METAL IN THEIR HANDS."
—*Simon Bisley, in need of professional help* (Wizard #3, October 1991)

the best quotes of the last 5 years!

and stuff. I'd really appreciate it if you guys answered my letter. Thank you for your time.

Zack Clayton
Slidell, LA

The boys at Graphitti, who make some of the coolest comic gimcrack you've ever seen (like a Madman yo-yo or a Sin City lighter) can be reached at: 1140 North Kraemer Blvd., Unit B, Anaheim, CA 92806-1919. Drop them a line and tell 'em Wizard sent ya.

Hello,

Maybe you guys can help me get a few questions answered.

1) Is there a Joseph Michael Linsner art book? The *Dawn and Beyond* trading cards just aren't big enough!

2) Is Terry Moore as great in person as he seems in *Strangers in Paradise*? I love his letter columns.

3) Wasn't the accent in the movie "Fargo" annoying? Yah, sure.

4) What do you do with the tons of mail you must get?

Christine Koenig
Belleville, IL

Hello, yourself.

Maybe we can.

1) There's no book yet, but Sirius Entertainment published a Dawn: Images of Heaven portfolio back in 1995, featuring some of Linsner's art in large format. A Linsner art book from Sirius is a future possibility.

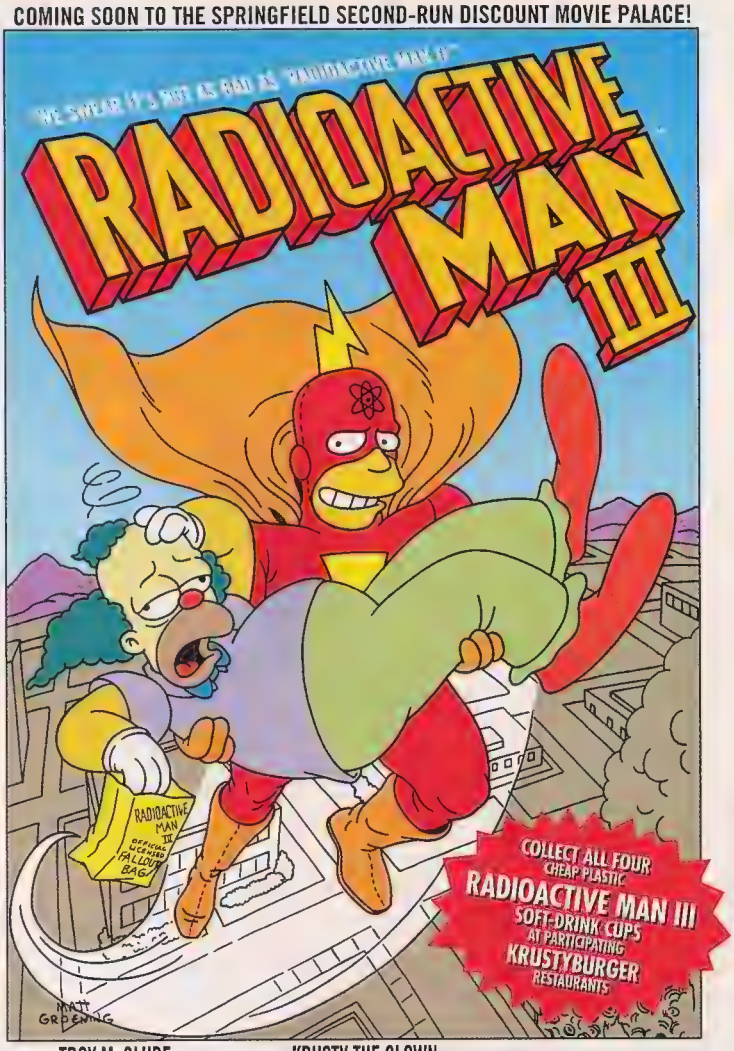
2) Yeah, Terry Moore is one heck of a nice guy. He's easygoing, polite, a real gentleman and always passes the pepper shaker when you ask him. But what's this about his letters column? What's this one? Chopped liver? Never read Terry Moore's letter columns again, dammit!

(Twice in one month. I'm getting just a bit insecure here.)

3) Nah. I went to school in Northern Minnesota and I kinda got used to it. It's actually endearing to me, although the accent was grossly exaggerated in the movie. You betcha, it was.

4) Wizard gets about 3,000 letters a month. All are read. A few are run in

COMING SOON TO THE SPRINGFIELD SECOND-RUN DISCOUNT MOVIE PALACE!



STARRING TROY McCLURE AS RADIOACTIVE MAN • KRUSTY THE CLOWN AS KRUSTO THE EVIL CLOWN • SPECIAL TOKEN CAMEO APPEARANCE BY THE ORIGINAL 1950'S TV SHOW FALLOUT BOY BUDDY HODGES AS FALLOUT BOY'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER

GET RICH KWIK!
FIND OUT HOW IN SIMPSONS #22
PLUS: THE KINETIC CONCLUSION OF OUR DELUXE Roswell PREVIEW!

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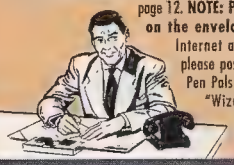
Hey! It's Pen Pals

Meet your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page 12. **NOTE: Please write your age on the envelope.** If you want your Internet address listed instead, please post your info in the new Pen Pals message board on our "Wizard World" forum on America Online. Hey, make a friend!



P E N P A L S

Luke Hackenberg
Age: 18 Sex: Male
3697 Burrshire Dr. NW
Canton, OH 44709
Likes: *Starman, Impulse, Flash*

Dan Hester
Age: 14 Sex: Male
11830 S. 700 E.
Lafayette, IN 47905
Likes: *Spawn, Gen^{13}*, all Vertigo

John Schraeder
Age: 14 Sex: Male
109 Key Bend Dr.
Enterprise, AL 36330
Likes: *Spawn, X-Men Adventures, Freex*

Amy McNulty
Age: 12 Sex: Female
4117 4th Street
Kenosha, WI 53144
Likes: *Fantastic Four, X-Men, What If?*

Roger Harvey
Age: 22 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 267
Pax, WV 25904
Likes: *Spawn*, Image titles, X-titles

Sara Hudgens
Age: 14 Sex: Female
208 Boulder Way
Stockbridge, GA 30281
Likes: *Lady Death, Mortal Kombat, Generation X*

Jeremy Kratochwill
Age: 13 Sex: Male
428 South Flower St.
Anchorage, AK 99508
Likes: *Magic* titles, most Marvel, most Image

this column. Some are forwarded to customer service or our price guide department. A few are answered personally. Unfortunately, there's no way we can answer everyone's letter. The remainder are recycled after they've been read.

Hi!

My friend Maclovio and I have a bet. He said that Captain America was the first Marvel hero, but I say that it's Sub-Mariner and the Human Torch. Can you please tell us who's right?

Ernest Garcia
Denver, CO

Maclovio owes you. Subby and the Torch appeared together in Marvel Comics *#1 (September 1939), while Cap first appeared in* Captain America Comics *#1 (March 1941). An interesting aside: The Sub-Mariner actually predates the Human Torch, as his story in* Marvel Comics *was reprinted from* Motion Pictures Funnies Weekly, *which appeared earlier in 1939.*

Dear Jim,

I have a question that's been bugging me for a very long time: What are Silver Age, Golden Age and Modern Age comics?

Matt Hewitt
Warwick, NY

Hoo, boy. That's a tough one. It goes kinda like this:

Most everyone agrees that the Golden Age of comics started with Action Comics *#1, the first appearance of Superman, in June 1938.*

A date you can carve in stone is October 1956. That's the publication date of Showcase *#4, which introduced Barry Allen, the new Flash. This is undoubtedly the beginning of the Silver Age. Most will agree that all comics prior to this date are Golden Age comics, although some would argue that the Golden Age ended a bit earlier and there's a gray area in there somewhere.*

The Silver Age then runs from 1956 to...some point after that. The beginning of the Modern Age is undefined. Some would argue that it begins with Giant-Size X-Men *#1 (1975), the first appearance of the new X-Men. Some say that it starts with* Batman: The Dark Knight Returns *(1986), the first "dark hero." Personally, I'd say it starts with the first major cracks in the Comics Code, the* Amazing Spider-Man *"drug issues" of 1971.*

There is zero consensus on where the Modern Age starts, but history usually gets better with perspective. Sooner or later, a consensus will emerge. One thing is for sure: Whichever comic is deigned the first in the Modern Age will become one damn important book.

Dear Wizard,

I have always wondered whether Professor Xavier is permanently bald or if he shaves his noggin. Personally, I have found that ladies' razors are much gentler than men's.

Glenn Varlack
Mission, TX

According to the folks at Marvel, the Prof is permanently bald and does not need to shave his bean. By the way, how many men down there in Mission, Texas, use ladies' razors like you do?

Dear Magic Words,

I have a theory that could easily explain almost every continuity flaw in Spider-Man history. It revolves around the Wall-Crawler's spider-sense.

Spidey's spider-sense, as I understand it, is a form of precognition that is 100-percent accurate in its predictions. One of the bad things about precognition is the fact that it is essentially useless, due to the fact that the future can't be changed. Spider-Man, however, *does* change the future every time he uses his spider-sense to avoid danger. It is conceivable that every time he alters the time continuum, he creates a minuscule time paradox. As the source of the disturbances, "time" may "view" him as a sort of virus that needs eliminating in order to preserve the universe's "well-being." To this end, "time" may be trying to destroy him through impossibly bad luck.

This would also explain how so many of his friends have become major-league supervillains, something that I have had a hard time swallowing over the years.

James Dysart
Brainerd, MN

So Spidey is an enemy of time? I like the theory, even though I can't really go along with it. It is nice food for thought, though.

Interestingly enough, Brainerd was the setting for a large portion of the movie "Fargo." Weird convergences this month.

Dear Wizard,

You're always doing these "When Titans Tussle" things, so tell me this: Who would win if Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti got into a fight? How about Andy and Adam Kubert?

Will Gray
Concord, NC

Let's tackle the Ash *creative team first. Jimmy Palmiotti said, "I'd win because I'm from Brooklyn. Even if I couldn't win, I'd just hire someone to beat him up." Surprisingly enough, Quesada agreed. "He'd win, but he'd have to get about 10 of his knife-sticking, club-wielding goombas to do it. He'd never win in a fair fight."*

As for the Brothers Kubert, I got a hold of Andy Kubert, who said, "Because I'm younger, stronger, taller and all-around better-looking, I'd kick his butt." Adam Kubert was unavailable for comment. Andy thinks he's cowering in fear, but I disagree: We all know that the big brother can always beat up the little brother.

Dear Wizards,

I'm naked and LOVING IT!

Pete Hunt
Tiller, OR
NiNja17466@aol.com

I'm pretty much clothed and LIKING IT!

PENPALS

Bernadine Altenroxel
Age: 20 Sex: Female
P.O. Box 4
MOOKETSI 0825
Northern Province, South Africa
Likes: *The X-Files, Batman*

Jeremy Jackson
Age: 16 Sex: Male
3645 N 6th Ave #78
Phoenix, AZ 85033
Likes: *Superman, Green Lantern, Azrael*

Bill McVeigh
Age: 22 Sex: Male
77 Kirby Road
Aspley Brisbane, QLD, 4034
Australia
Likes: *Superman, GL, The X Files*

Kirsten Brickner
Age: 27 Sex: Female
712 15th St. SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52403
Likes: *Sandman, Bone, Hate*

James Layman
Age: 13 Sex: Male
james@i4cm.org
Likes: *X-Men, Avengers, Scud*

Galileio
Age: 24 Sex: Male
Galileio@aol.com
Likes: *X-Men, Sandman, Hulk*

Chris
Age: 19 Sex: Male
Gambit1040@aol.com
Likes: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Generation X*

SOUND BITES

"A LOT OF PUBLISHERS ARE BECOMING LIKE THE FRANKLIN MINT; THEY'RE NO LONGER PUBLISHERS, THEY'RE MAKING COLLECTIBLES—PERIOD."
—*Jim Shooter (Wizard #7, March 1992)*

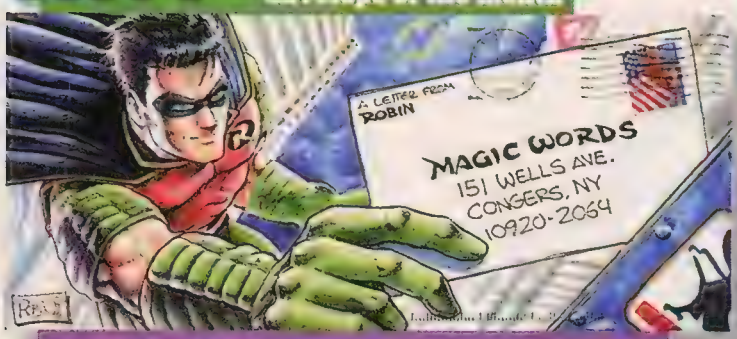
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Will Charles Xavier Destroy
The Rest Of The Marvel Universe As Well?
SLAUGHTERHOUSE
ONSLAUGHT

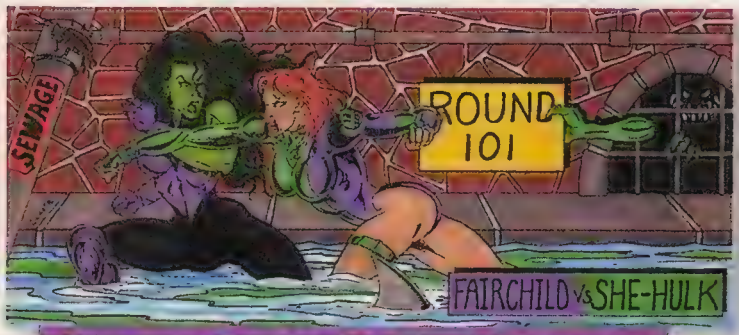
LETTER ART

Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of the *Madman: The Oddity Odyssey* trade paperback signed by Mike Allred, a Toy Biz Marvel CD-ROM, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* two extra Toy Biz Marvel CD-ROMs! (*Gracias* for the goodies, Toy Biz!) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address on the *back* of your envelope.

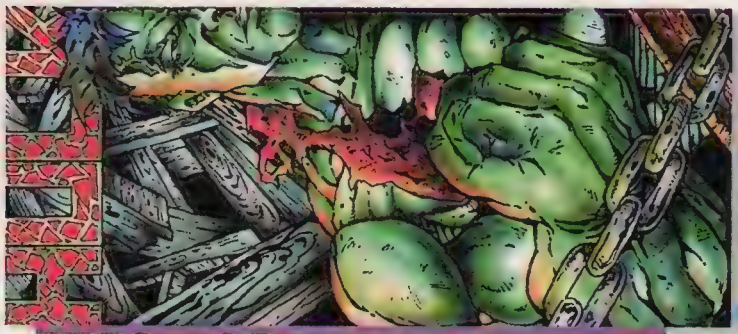
envelope of the month



ROBIN Robin Perez



FAIRCHILD & SHE-HULK Robert York



HULK Donny G. Kusuma

SPAWN D.K. Dang

more letters from beyond the grave

Dear Wizard,

I know this is totally unrelated to comics, but what do you think of the Big 8 becoming the Big 12? I think it's an atrocity and everyone around here agrees. What do you foreigners think?

Sean Snavely
Emporia, KS

I think the conference will be improved in football and baseball, but the change will scarcely make a difference in basketball.

Hey, Wizard!

What the heck is a Bat-Mite?

Jeremy Strunk
Oklahoma City, OK
TDLONGS@aol.com

A Bat-Mite is a lot like a Bat-Flea or a Bat-Tick, and can usually be taken care of with some good grooming of your dog or the right medicated powder. See your veterinarian for further details.

Paul Schrada

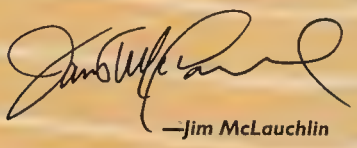
Dear Wizard,

Why do your employees bring Nerf guns to work?

Steve Teddy
San Mateo, CA

Because they took our real ones away. Remember: When Nerf is outlawed, only outlaws will have Nerf!

That's my cue. As soon as you hit bumper sticker philosophy, you know it's time to pack it in. Until next month, I remain...



—Jim McLauchlin

Real soon now, Jim McLauchlin will hijack a Fritos truck and a beer truck and invite all of you over for a big party.

Send letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@AOL.Com

"IF WE CREATE GREAT ENTERTAINMENT AND IT HAPPENS TO BE COLLECTIBLE TOO, THEN WE REALLY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED OUR PURPOSE."
—Steve Massarsky, Valiant Comics (Wizard #9, May 1992)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

WHAT IT TAKES №6

What's it take to make a great comic book?

HEROES.

BOTS™

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RICHARD BENNETT • ARON WIESENFELD

The second WildStorm/Marvel Crossover, coming in August from Marvel Comics and WildStorm Productions.

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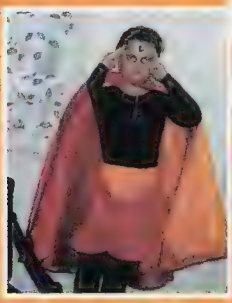
WAID LEAVES X-MEN,
Cites clash with Lobdell



New hero Captain Zit Head wreaks havoc. "There was this hideous blue zit on his forehand and he just squeezed and squeezed," cried pus-covered victim. "Oh, the horror."

Massive Valiant relaunch sees big cutbacks. "It was either lose 2 limbs or become a regular back-up in Archer & Armstrong," former robot fighter revealed.

Man orders comics through mail-order service, gets tires instead. "I really don't mind," said confused consumer. "They've got more thread on them that Youngblood and they read better, too!"

Mark Waid—citing incompatibility with fellow writer **Scott Lobdell**—has decided to leave the ***X-Men*** after a six-issue stint.

"It just wasn't working out," Waid said. "Scott Lobdell and I, as it turned out to our mutual horror, are completely incompatible as writers."

Waid will conclude his X-tour of duty with issue #56 and will also finish his commitment to Marvel with the ***Marvel Universe: Onslaught*** bookend which completes this summer's "Onslaught" storyline.

Despite rumors of infighting and personality clashes, Waid pointed to creative differences as the reason for the split.

"Scott and I just don't build stories the same way," said Waid. "We don't look for the same thing in stories, we just have a difference in approach. I think it started to show up about halfway through my run, and it got increasingly worse. Unfortunately, one of us had to go, and Scott's got a fat contract at Marvel, so I left."

"I think I write the plot around characters," explained Lobdell, "whereas his tendency is to try and shoehorn characters into the plot."

Although Waid had worked with Lobdell before, it had been while Waid was an editor at DC. "I actually bought Scott's first story," Waid recalled with a laugh. "I think it was some spawn of Frankenstein story."

Waid said that he had a verbal agreement with Marvel to produce six issues of *X-Men*, at the end of which, Waid and the X-editorial office would re-evaluate if he would remain on the book. It was a natural point to leave, Waid admitted. "[X-Men Editor and Marvel Editor-in-Chief] **Bob Harras** and I just had to shake hands and walk away friends."

"Mark's agreement was that he would work on *X-Men* for a six-month trial basis," explained Harras. "Mark decided that he would continue with Marvel, but that he would rather work on a different project. This is certainly not a terrible thing, because our relationship will continue. And my concern is, as long as the writer and artist are happy, I'm happy."

The *X-Men* exodus marked Waid's second controversial departure in recent months. After teaming with penciler **Ron Garney** to build a fan base on ***Captain America***, Waid left the book after the announcement **Rob Liefeld** would take it over as part of the "**Heroes Reborn**" campaign.

Waid acknowledged that leaving *X-Men* on the heels of leaving *Captain America* may cast him in a bad light.

"I'm disappointed, and I feel bad because I don't want to be one of the guys who comes in and does six issues, and blows out," said Waid. "I'm sorry if I let anybody down who expected me to be on the book for a long amount of time. I didn't come in wanting to leave, I came in to stay. Unfortunately, it just didn't work out."

Waid said that he'll be using the free time to work on his other two books, ***The Flash*** and ***Impulse***.

"I just want to take some time off and sharpen up what I'm already working on," Waid said. "*Flash* and *Impulse* both need a good hard look, because we have to plan out the next couple of years for both books. Really, I'm just going to concentrate on what's on my plate."

Waid's last full issue of *X-Men* will be #55. "I will be dialoguing #56," Waid said, "and co-plotting and dialoguing ***Onslaught: Marvel Universe***, the finale to the 'Onslaught' story, then taking my leave.

"I'm very disappointed this turned out to be the case," he continued, "and look forward to working with Andy Kubert and Marvel editorial on any possible future projects." According to Harras, the Waid/Kubert project will be a new **Ka-Zar** book. ■ *Matt Brady (with additional reporting by Ruth Morrison)*

ahead

NICIEZA AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF!

SHI AND DAREDEVIL CROSSOVER!

PÉREZ LEAVES AVENGERS!

AND COMPANY

Nicieza named Acclaim Editor-in-Chief

Admitting to one of the worst-kept secrets in comics, **Acclaim Comics** has officially announced that **Fabian Nicieza** is its new editor-in-chief, replacing **Bob Layton**.

Nicieza joined the company in April, but because of contractual obligations, an official announcement was not made until May. Nicieza will oversee the development and content of all of Acclaim's comics titles and imprints. Layton will remain a consultant to Acclaim and will write several new titles.

"I'm really approaching this as a new company start up in a lot of ways," Nicieza said, adding that he wants to produce a line of comics that will have wide appeal to all ages and groups. "For every concept presented to me, I have to ask, 'Can I take this out beyond just comics? Does this work in bookstores? Am I stretching my audience rubber band with this?' I don't want to sell just to 40-year-olds; I don't want to sell just to 14-year-olds; I don't want to sell just to 8-year-olds. Guess what? I want to sell to *all* of them."

Before picking up the reins at Acclaim, Nicieza spent a decade at Marvel Comics, first in its sales department, then as a writer and editor. Among his writing credits are *Cable*, *X-Force* and *New Warriors*; he edited a number of licensed properties, including *Barbie*, *Ren & Stimpy* and *TekWorld*.

Paul Schraidi

Fabian Nicieza

What made Nicieza choose Acclaim as the place to go back to the editor's desk? "One of the things that clinched me wanting to take this job was that a lot of the things they had in development, a lot of deals they were beginning to discuss, were exactly the kinds of things I felt our industry needed," he said.

One of Nicieza's major assignments will be to revive Acclaim's flagging **Valiant** imprint, home of its adventure and superhero line, including **Magnus**, **Solar**, **X-O Manowar** and **Turok**. Searching for a path to follow, Nicieza looked to one of the grand masters of comics. "I am taking the Julie Schwartz approach to this—the way he remade all of DC's characters, yet was respectful of what went before," he noted. "Our tagline is 'Same as it never was.' I sincerely doubt that any of my revamps will be unrecognizable to the audience that read them in the past."

To revamp those characters and concepts, Nicieza said he is turning to both established Valiant talent and creators who have never worked for the company before. Among the names that will be familiar to fans are **Mark Waid** (*Kingdom Come*), **Kurt Busiek** (*Astro City*), former DC editor **Brian Augustyn**, **Garth Ennis** (*Preacher*), **Tom Peyer** (*Legion of Super-Heroes*) and **Kevin Maguire** (*Ghost*). "The creative teams we're putting together for the Valiant heroes line will appeal to old and new readers alike," Nicieza summed up.

Acclaim also recently acquired the rights to reprint the popular Classics Illustrated line, in an agreement with First Classics Inc. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

We Looked It Up

Ra's al Ghul (raysh al gool) [Arabic, the demon's head]*DC Universe* 1 Megalomaniac/eco-terrorist who's unsuccessfully attempted to destroy the world and recreate a better one in his own vision; can extend lifespan and renew his vitality by using the chemically filled Lazarus Pit 2 First appeared in *Batman* #232 3 Recently unleashed the fatal Apocalypse Virus which devastated Gotham City 4 A used-ghost dealership located directly across the street from Joe's Autobody in downtown Bloomington, Ind.

Marc Silvestri Leaves Image

Marc Silvestri, one of the six original founders of **Image Comics**, is taking his **Top Cow Productions** studio and leaving Image.

"With the success of our comic book lines and the increasing recognition of Top Cow as a viable brand, it was time to establish the company as an independent entity," said Silvestri.

A spokesperson for Top Cow cited irreconcilable differences with one of the Image partners as a main reason for Top Cow's departure.

"This decision was made yesterday and our relationship with *Wizard* is strong enough that we felt *Wizard* deserved to hear of it first," said Brad Foxhoven, vice president of business affairs at Top Cow.

Besides problems with the unnamed Image partner, Silvestri felt that Image's goals have drifted away from the original principles it was founded on. In leaving Image, Top Cow hopes to rekindle those ideals. "Marc and Top Cow's goal remain the same: Produce the highest level of quality in the industry, and provide it in a timely manner," said Foxhoven. "Top Cow wants to be seen as a leader, both within comics and entertainment, in supplying the best in creative content."

The decision to leave Image was not taken lightly, and it only became a serious possibility in the last few weeks, said Silvestri. "This was a very difficult decision. I had spoken to Todd [McFarlane], whose opinion I respect greatly as a friend and peer, and he understood our concerns. Todd did not want us to leave, but again, understood that we had to do what we had to do."

There are no plans for the company to relaunch all of its properties with #1 issues, but it does expect to be distributing its books on a non-exclusive basis. Currently, Image Comics distributes exclusively through Diamond Distributors.

As far as Top Cow's relationship with the rest of the Image creators, the company hopes it can still maintain a good one. "We hold no ill will towards Image. We still consider ourselves to be on good terms with the company, and we hope that Image will continue to prosper," said Silvestri.

With the departure of one of its founding fathers, is this a possible foreshadowing for the end of Image as we know it? Not according to Silvestri. "Image is certainly strong enough to handle the departure of one partner venturing off on their own."

Check out next month's "Wizard News" for the full story behind Top Cow's departure from Image. ■ *John B. Lacey*

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story broke as *Wizard* #60 literally went to press. For those of you who look to *Wizard* for its predictions, be sure to check out page 118.

SOUND BITES

"THIS MAY BE THE COOLEST THING I'VE EVER WORKED ON! IT'S WHAT MY FRIENDS AND I USED TO DREAM ABOUT WHEN WE WERE 14, BUT NEVER BELIEVED WOULD ACTUALLY HAPPEN."
—*Dan Jurgens on* DC versus Marvel *(Wizard #51, November 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years.

Wizard Awards Nominees Announced

McFarlane, mutants and Marvel lead the nomination pack for the 1996 Wizard Fan Awards.

Image's **Todd McFarlane** topped all nominees, earning four nominations, including Favorite Writer, Penciler (which he won in both 1993 and 1994) and Inker. Twenty-one out of 44 character candidates were mutants (with Gambit getting four nods himself), and **Marvel** was represented over 60 times.

After a ballot was included in *Wizard* #53, fans sent in their choices for their favorite professionals of 1995 (including comic writer and cover artist), along with the characters, stories, titles and comic book-related products they personally felt were the best.

The top five vote-getters in each category became the nominees, with the winner having received the most nods.

"The Wizard Fan Awards represent the pinnacle of success for comic book creators and publishers," said *Wizard* Direct Sales Manager Marty Stever, one of the event's arrangers. "Because they are really bestowed by comic readers, there can be no higher mark of distinction. That's why you'll see the awards prominently displayed in the offices of nearly every major comic book publisher."

Writer **Mark Waid** (*Captain America, Flash*), who's up for Favorite Writer (while Cap's up for Most Improved Male Character and Title, and *Flash*'s "Terminal Velocity" is in the running for Favorite Story Arc), said, "I'm surprised. I'm amazed. I thank the fans for their support, and I'm lucky to be where I am."

The awards ceremony was held at Dragon Con in Atlanta on June 21. Below is a complete list of the nominees, and winners will be revealed next issue with a complete story and photos.

Favorite Writer: Peter David, Neil Gaiman, Scott Lobdell, Todd McFarlane, Mark Waid

Favorite Penciler: J. Scott Campbell, Adam Kubert, Jim Lee, Joe Madureira, Todd McFarlane

Favorite Inker: Alex Garner, Todd McFarlane, Jimmy Palmiotti, Tim Townsend, Scott Williams

Favorite Colorist: Steve Buccellato/Electric Crayon, Joe Chiodo, Steve Oliff, Joe Rosas

Favorite Letterer: John Costanza, Chris Eliopoulos, Todd Klein, Tom Orzechowski, Richard Starkings

Favorite Cover Artist: Adam Hughes, Adam Kubert, Jim Lee, Joe Madureira, Todd McFarlane

Favorite Editor: Brian Augustyn, Karen Berger, Bob Budiansky, Bob Harras, Denny O'Neil

Favorite Painter: Julie Bell, The Hildebrandt Brothers, Joe Jusko, Alex Ross, Boris Vallejo

Favorite Hero: Batman, Gambit, Spawn, Spider-Man, Wolverine

Favorite Heroine: Fairchild, Rogue, Shi, Storm, Wonder Woman

Favorite Villain: Apocalypse, Joker, Magneto, Sabretooth, Violator

Favorite Villainess: Angela, Catwoman, Lady Death, Mystique, Poison Ivy

Favorite Supporting Male Character: Alfred Pennyworth, Beast, Gambit, Robin

Favorite Supporting Female Character: Jubilee, Lois Lane, Mary Jane Parker, Rogue, Storm

Most Improved Male Character: Captain America, Gambit, Iceman, Spawn, Spider-Man

Most Improved Female Character: Jubilee, Rogue, Sarah Rainmaker, Storm, Wonder Woman

Character Most Deserving of Own Ongoing Title: Angela, Gambit, Magneto, Nightwing, Storm

Favorite Publisher: Chaos! Comics, Dark Horse Comics, DC Comics, Image Comics, Marvel Comics

Favorite Single Issue: *X-Men Alpha, X-Men Omega, Sandman #69*

Favorite Story Arc: "Age of Apocalypse" (X-Men titles), "The Kindly Ones" (*Sandman*), "Maximum Clonage" (Spider-Man titles), "Terminal Velocity" (*Flash*)

Favorite Ongoing Title: *Gen^{13}, Spawn, Uncanny X-Men, Wolverine, X-Men*

Most Improved Ongoing Title: *Captain America, Uncanny X-Men, Wolverine, Wonder Woman, X-Men*

Favorite Cover: *Gen^{13} #1, Preacher #3, Wolverine #90, X-Men Alpha, X-Men Omega*

Favorite One-Shot or Mini-Series: *Angela, Gen^{13}, Rogue, Weapon X*

Favorite Graphic Novel, TPB or Hardcover: *Gen^{13}, Lady Death: The Reckoning, Mr. Punch, Spawn, The X-Files*

Favorite Trading Card Series or Set: *Marvel Masterpieces, Marvel Metal, Spawn, Ultra Spider-Man, Ultra X-Men II, The X-Files*

Favorite Toy Line: Legends of Batman, Spawn, Spider-Man, Star Wars, X-Men

Favorite TV Series: "Babylon 5," "Lois & Clark," "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine," "The X-Files"

Favorite Animated TV Series: "The Maxx," "The Simpsons," "Spider-Man," "The Tick," "X-Men"

Favorite Feature Film: "Batman Forever," "Judge Dredd," "Mortal Kombat," "Tank Girl" ■ *Marc Wilkofsky*

Offbeat Ennis Writes His Own Ticket

Garth Ennis may be the most sought after writer in comics.

His irreverent style on ***Preacher*** and ***Hitman*** has jumped him to the A-list of comics writers. Now get ready for a slew of Ennis-driven projects from **Vertigo, DC, Top Cow** and **WildStorm** over the next several months.

Garth Ennis

Two are spin-offs from *Preacher*, the black humor monthly he and co-creator Steve Dillon produce for Vertigo. There's ***Preacher Special: Saint of Killers***, a four-issue mini-series (art by Steve Pugh) that began in June, and ***Preacher Special*** #1, with Dillon art, a 56-page one-shot scheduled for October.

Other forthcoming projects include revamps of two of DC's popular war series. ***The Unknown Soldier*** will be a four-part mini-series under the Vertigo imprint. "This will be a much darker treatment of the character than before," said Ennis. A two-part series, ***Enemy Ace: War in Heaven***, will move Hans Von Hammer's forays into the deadly skies to World War II, "with the added dimension that he is now fighting for the Nazi regime, which he loathes."

Bloody Mary, a four-issue mini with art by co-creator Carlos Ezquerra, is a war story of a different sort: it's set in the year 2020, during World War III. The book debuts in August, one of the first releases under DC's new science-fiction imprint Helix.

Two not-yet-scheduled Vertigo projects are ***Heartland***, a one-shot with Dillon, which Ennis describes "as a slice of life drama featuring Kit, John Constantine's ex-lover from ***Hellblazer***," and ***Pride and Joy***, of which the author will say only that "it is a four-issue crime story."

The Darkness, an ongoing monthly from Top Cow, with **Marc Silvestri**, "will develop themes I first put forward in the [just-completed] ***Medieval Spawn/Witchblade*** mini-series," Ennis added. And, as if that weren't enough, he will be taking over ***WildC.A.T.s***, WildStorm's popular team title, when Alan Moore's run comes to an end late this year. ■ *Jack Curtin*

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

• More **Amalgam**? Maybe, as rumblings between **Marvel** and **DC** indicate there will be more in the future.

• The evil **Gen^{13}** team book will be called ***DV8*** not *Deviants*, as originally reported. Its first issue, shipping in August, will have eight variant covers. Writing is **Warren Ellis**, drawing is **Humberto Ramos**.

• In addition to ***Elektra*** in September, **Mike Deodato Jr.** will take over the art chores for ***The Incredible Hulk*** that month, gearing up for Hulk's big media push with toys and a cartoon series.

• Hot off his ***Captain America*** stint, **Ron Garney** will draw a fill-in issue of ***Amazing Spider-Man*** #416 in August before taking over ***Silver Surfer***.

• **Crusade** ain't saying anything about its "**Unitus**" crossover project in January '97, rumored to be a major project. Could this mega-project include Tucci's '96 convention buddies **Event Comics** and **Harris Comics**?

• Look out this year for comic book adaptations of TV's "**Kindred: The Embraced**" and "**Mystery Science Theatre 3000**."

Jusko Does Fully Painted Vampirella Mini-Series

"It's the phattest, hottest stuff—it is so dope!" said **Harris Comics**' Managing Editor David Bogart of the eagerly awaited, fully painted **Vampirella** mini-series by **James Robinson** (*Starman*) and artist **Joe Jusko** (*Marvel Masterworks*).

Set to be released during February 1997's "Vampirella Month," the as-yet-untitled, two-issue mini-series returns Harris' gorgeous femme fatale to the mysterious Drakulon, the planet of her birth in classic Warren Vampirella stories. While current Harris continuity has revised Vampi's origin, distancing her from the 'interplanetary origin' established in the Warren stories, the new Robinson/Jusko tale will firmly cement Drakulon in the Vampirella mythos. "It definitely does exist, but it's more a 'place' than a planet," said Bogart, who is still keeping the exact nature of the tale under wraps. Due to a death in his family, writer James Robinson could not be reached for comment.

Jusko's Vampirella

As the mini-series marks Robinson's first encounter with the classic Bad Girl, it is also notable as painter Joe Jusko's very first published sequential art. Although Jusko painted a graphic novel called *Hellrider* for Epic Comics which never saw publication, the artist admits that only a project of this caliber could tempt him into taking another stab at painted sequential comics.

"I always wanted to do Vampirella work," said Jusko. "People have been asking me to do continuity for years. I could never find anything to keep my attention for that length of time to paint it, until this."

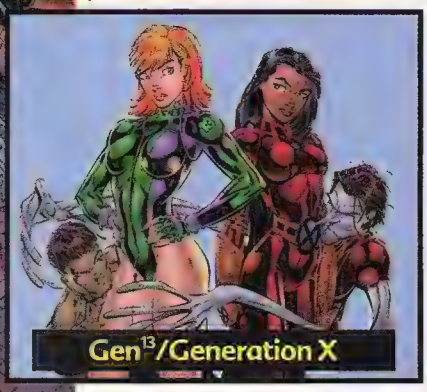
Additionally, Jusko admitted that the "homecoming" storyline held a certain attraction for him.

"I didn't really like the urban Vampirella. Drawing buildings is repetitive enough—and painting them just takes forever. If we did do something, I wanted to do it on Drakulon."

Fans eager for the latest taste of Jusko's Vampirella can check out ***Vampirella: Sad Wings of Destiny***, a one-shot "autobiography" scheduled for release in September/October, written by David Quinn and Sean Fernald, with pin-ups by Jusko, **Alan Davis**, **Rudy Nebres**, **Amanda Conner**, **Louis Small Jr.**, **Caesar** and **Gary Frank**, among others. ■ *Scott Beatty*

Lookee here!

Yep, it's official. Jim Lee's WildC.A.T.s will be teaming up with Marvel's X-Men sometime in 1997 in a four-issue mini-series published by WildStorm and Marvel (two issues apiece). Jim will definitely be involved in some way, and Scott Lobdell is currently slated to write it. More details as soon we get 'em!


Gen13/Generation X

SOUND BITES

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE OF COMIC BOOKS IS, BUT I GET THE FEELING THAT THERE IS A FUTURE."
—*Alan Moore (Wizard #52, February 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

CyberFrog® RESERVOIR FROG #1 of 2

CyberFrog returns in his newest mini-series!!
It's all out gangland warfare- CyberFrog style!

Writer/artist **ETHAN VAN SCIVER**
brings you along on one very sick trip as CyberFrog battles the Swarm and Mr. Skorpeone.

Full Color; 32 pages, $2.95 US; $3.95 Canada

"Ethan is an immensely talented young punk, and if he gets any better, I'll have to break his fingers."
—*ERIK LARSEN*

"I can't believe the way CyberFrog lept out of the store! I've sold 200 copies! CyberFrog is an unabashed hit!"
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—*DAN FRAGA*

"It doesn't suck!"
—*JIMMY PALMIOTTI*

Wrap-around cover by:

ERIK LARSEN
(Savage Dragon)

HANG ON TO YOUR EARS, THIS SEPTEMBER!

Superman Co-creator Siegel Fondly Remembered

Superman co-creator **Jerry Siegel** was mourned at a pair of memorial services—one in Burbank, California and the other at the Time-Life Building in New York.

Siegel—who died at the age of 81 on Jan. 29—is best known for his creation of Superman, with partner **Joseph Shuster**.

"I've been a fan of Jerry Siegel's writing since childhood," said **DC Comics** Executive Vice President and Publisher **Paul Levitz**, "and it's been both a pleasure and a privilege to have him as a friend for the past 20 years. It's an honor to help carry on his legacy as both a writer and a publisher."

Mike Carlin, group editor for Superman for more than 10 years, spoke of growing up sharing comic books with his mother, a Superman fanatic.

"I'm a second-generation Superman fan," said Carlin in his brief eulogy. "I'm sure that's part of why I'm here today."

Speakers took turns sharing their fondest Siegel memory or character. **John Ostrander**, current *Spectre* writer, spoke of his "favorite Siegel character," the Spectre (co-created by Bernard Bailey). Writer **Kim Yale** paid homage to **Lois Lane**.

"Lois Lane has been significant to female readers down through the decades," said Yale, "a career woman who is smart, savvy, intelligent and not afraid of taking risks to get the Big Story. Lois was a liberated woman long before the term was invented."

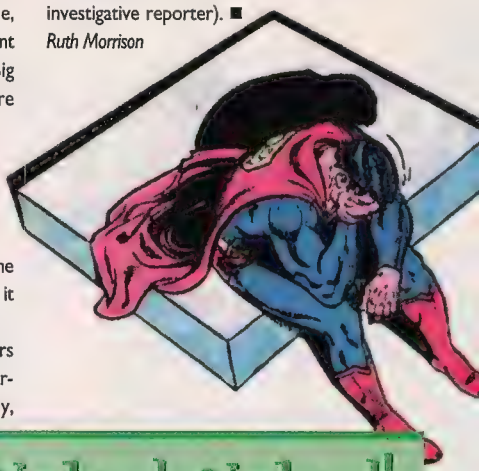
Still, Superman dominated the afternoon.

"In many ways," said erstwhile writer/artist **John Byrne**, after the memorial, "Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster reminded me of a quote from Albert Einstein, where Einstein said that he only ever had one idea in his life. In their case, it was the best idea of all."

"Jerry Siegel created a family of characters that have become the personification of American morals and values," said Robert A. Daly, co-chairman and co-chief executive officer of Warner Bros. "Through his characters, his memory will live on forever. He will be sorely missed."

Siegel is survived by, among others, his wife, Joanne Siegel (the original model for Lois Lane), and their daughter, Laura Carter Larson (currently an investigative reporter). ■

Ruth Morrison



School Is In For Stan-Hattan Project

The House of Ideas became the Schoolhouse of Ideas this past autumn as **Marvel** editors James Felder and Mark Powers developed the Stan-Hattan Project, a New York University college course in which the curriculum is plotting and scripting comics.

The Stan-Hattan Project gave 10 NYU students a ground zero from which to cultivate their skills. Felder and Powers conceived the Project, named in honor of Marvel publisher **Stan Lee**, as a means of instructing hopeful writers in the basics of entering the industry. "When writers submit stuff to us," Felder explained, "there are so many specific weird things that we look for."

The original class, approximately a semester and a half long, used unreleased issues of ***The Incredible Hulk*** as a template for honing students' plotting and scripting abilities. "We were hoping just to get enough kids out there with principals, so that when they start submitting stuff to us or other companies, they would be far enough along that it'd be more useful than the stuff we'd been getting," Felder said. "Our assumption was, we keep doing it for a couple semesters and eventually somebody along the way would kind of pick it up as they were submitting."

The class far exceeded the editors' goals—two out of 10 students proved skilled enough to be hired after just one semester. Felder cited Joe Kelly, a 24-year-old graduate student who will be co-writing with Ben Raab the upcoming ***2099: World of Tomorrow*** monthly, for his outstanding scripting skills, while he found 18-year-old undergraduate Jaime Campos' specialty to be exceptional character development. Both will be writing for the newest title in the company's 99-cent line, ***Marvel Fanfare***.

"Getting two more people, assuming that they eventually turn out to be good solid writers who do stuff well consistently, that makes it a success," Powers said.

"They're both pretty solid all around, and they're going to get better."

Based on the success of the first semester, Felder and Powers plan to return the Stan-Hattan Project to New York University for another semester this fall. ■ *Dean Simakis*

Naked, Naked, Naked!

Yeah, bein' nekkid's cool and all, but what we'd really like to see is you dressed up as your favorite comic book character. As you should know by now, the fifth annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest is well underway and unless you move your tukkis, you're gonna miss winning some really cool stuff! Just slap on some kinda homemade comic book/fantasy/sci-fi/whatever costume and take some good photos. Do a super job and you could be picked as our Grand Prize Winner. What's the booty? Well, we can't tell ya too much, but those groovy friends of ours at DC Comics are sponsoring this contest, and their 13-issue "The Long Halloween" Batman mini-series by Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale will certainly be involved. And yes, there'll be a whole bunch o' nifty Runner-Up prizes, too, but you're gonna shoot for the big loot, ain't ya?

Anyways, here's what you gotta do:

1) Dress up like anyone (or anything) you want—comic book character, video game character, something out of a book or movie, whatever (the more original your getup, the better your chances of winning).

2) The actual costume itself must be HOMEMADE, but you can add store-bought items to accent your outfit. For example, you can't go out and buy a Captain America mask for your Cap costume, but you can use a real archery set for your Green Arrow costume, got it?

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will NOT be accepted!), then write your name, age, full address, phone number and name of the character you're dressed as on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo (don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses in case some pictures suck. Just remember that magic five-letter word: "focus."

4) D'oh, we messed up! To be eligible to win, **we must receive your photo by August 2, 1996**, and not September 3 as we incorrectly reported in *Wizard* #58. Sorry for any trouble this may've cost you, but no sense wastin' your time complaining—move it or lose it, pal!

Send your entry to:
Costume Contest 5
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

You don't need eight arms to be a geek. But it sure can't hurt!

SOUND BITES

"I THINK I'D GET A KICK OUT OF WRITING LOBO."
—*Stan Lee (Wizard #53, January 1996)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years.

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'Barb Wire' Goes Bust

"**Barb Wire**" appears to be a bust.

The Gramercy film, based on the **Dark Horse Comics** characters and starring **Pamela Lee** of "**Baywatch**," placed 12th at the box office in its opening weekend release (May 3-5) with $1.83 million and then quickly disappeared from theaters. According to *Daily Variety* figures, "Barb Wire" opened in 1,312 theaters nationwide, the fourth most of any film premiering that weekend, but it came nowhere close to that in drawing movie-goers.

Dark Horse President **Mike Richardson**, who executive produced hit movies with "**The Mask**" and "**TimeCop**" in 1994, said he was disappointed with the response to "Barb Wire."

"My hope is it will still do extremely well on video," Richardson said in a statement through his office. "The female market did not respond to the film, which had a big effect on the box office."

The film, thanks in large part to Lee's high profile, had generated pre-release publicity, including an "On the Set" special on Showtime and an MTV special. But reviews for "Barb Wire" ranged from fair to mostly poor.

Sources said there are still hopes for overseas success for "Barb Wire" due to the international appeal of Lee and "Baywatch," the most-watched new TV series in the world. Some films make as much as 70 percent of their gross outside of the United States in the growing international market.

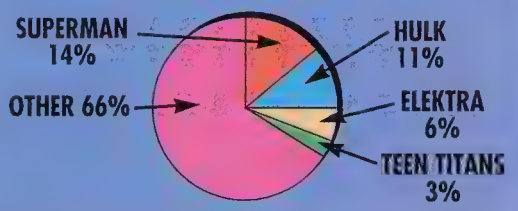
Not counting the success of "**Batman Forever**," "**Barb Wire**" continues a trend of comics-based movies bombing at the box office. "**Judge Dredd**" and "**Tank Girl**" were 1995 disappointments, as were genre films "**Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers**" and "**Street Fighter**."

A representative of Dark Horse said that a video release date for "Barb Wire" had not been set yet, however, rumors circulate that the film could be available as soon as 4th of July weekend. ■ *Rob Allstetter*

Question of the Month

Since *Wizard*'s celebratin' its Five-Year Anniversary this month, you'll find lots of editorial looking back at the past five years of comics, as well as our predictions for the future of the industry. But the future can't happen without you, the fans, so we used our "Wizard World" forum on America Online to hear your predictions. That being the case, we asked our computer literate fans the following:

Within the next five years, who of the following will be the biggest character(s) in comics: **Superman**, **Hulk**, **Teen Titans**, **Elektra** or **Other**?



While Superman just barely beat the Hulk as candidate for future superstar character, the overwhelming majority of people thought the next big character wouldn't be any of those listed. Most predicted it will still be the X-Men, or something X-related like Generation X, Bishop, Deadpool or Cable. A few others mentioned Impulse and Gen[13].

We also asked for your predictions on the following futuristic questions:

• In the next five years, what will be the next killer trend: manga (**45%**), science fiction (**21%**), reality books like *Strangers in Paradise* (**18%**), other (**16%**) or westerns (**0%**)? A few people mentioned interesting trends like Good Girls, fantasy and characters staying dead. And, as one fan posted, "The next killer trend in comics is what should *always* be the trend—solid characters with good writing *and* good artwork."

• Who will be the next superstar artist in the next five years: Ian Churchill (**58%**), Other (**25%**), Mike Wieringo (**11%**) or Steve Skroce (**6%**)?

The majority of people love Ian Churchill's work on *Cable* and the Onslaught poster from *Wizard* #58. As for other artists who you guys think are gonna hit superstardom in the future, the list includes Gary Frank, Humberto Ramos, Roger Cruz, Michael Turner and Howard Porter. ■ *Sorrell Booke*

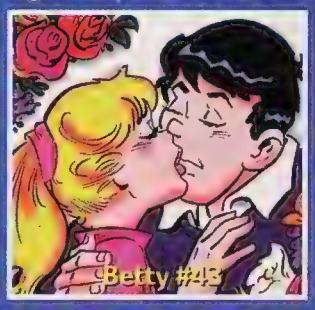
company updates

AC COMICS

AC Comics declares August FemForce Model Month, as the company releases the *Nightveil/Colt Special*. The one-shot features a photo cover starring FemForce spokesmodel Mary Capps.

ARCHIE COMICS

The unthinkable happens when Betty and Reggie start dating in August's *Betty* #43—but is this shocking shake-up permanent?...Look for a new mini-series starring Archie's one-time squeeze in September, entitled *Cheryl Blossom Goes Hollywood*.



ANTARCTIC PRESS

An all-new *Warrior Nun Areola* mini-series will begin in September, written by Steve Englehart (*The Night Man*)....Spinning off of *Warrior Nun* is *Lillith, Demon Princess*, a three-issue mini-series starting in August.

BIG ENTERTAINMENT

Mike Danger discovers the reason why he was sent to the future in *Mickey Spillane's Mike Danger* #5, due in August.

BONGO COMICS

Simpsons Comics #23, shipping in August, sees Bart head off to France again. Last time he visited (on the TV show), he became a slave at a scummy chateau, but this time he's bringing Krusty the Klown and Milhouse, so things should go much smoother. (Yeah, right.)

CALIBER PRESS

The X-Files creative team strikes again in August with Caliber's *Bandy Man*. Stefan Petrucha, Miran Kim and Charles Adlard join Jill Thompson on a three-issue mini-series about the Bandy Man, who is God's first and unfinished creation....Also in August comes *Creep* by Phil Hester, best known for his work on *Swamp Thing*. *Creep* picks up on the paranoid strangeness that appeals to *X-Files* fans.

CHAOS! COMICS

August's *Rack and Pain: Killers!* #1 (of 4) ($2.95) features a Jae Lee cover and art by Leonardo Jiminez in a tale of hired assassins on a planet known as "The Pile."...In August, Chaos! will also release an encore presentation of *Lady Death* #1 ($2.95).

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

This past May, the CBLDF agreed to assist creators Joe Lansdale, Timothy Truman and Sam Glanzman in their defense against a civil complaint brought by musicians Johnny Winter and Edgar Winter. The Winters' claims include defamation and invasion of privacy related to two characters, the Autumn brothers, in Vertigo/DC's 1995 mini-series *Jonah Hex: Riders of the Worm and Such*.

COPPERVALE PRESS

Due to health problems, *Starchild* creator James Owen is canceling all *Starchild* projects currently solicited, except: *Crossroads* #3-#4, *Metropolis Prologue*, *Sketchbook* and *Martin Humble Notecards*.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

Billy Tucci and his fellow Crusade talent will embark on a "Crusade Across the World" tour this summer. The tour—which also includes Peter Gutierrez, Brian David-Marshall, Gary Cohn, Steve Ellis and Amanda Conner—will traverse the U.S. and conclude with a trip to Europe....A crossover with Top Cow heads your way in August in *Tomoe/Witchblade: Fire Sermon* #1 ($3.95), featuring work by Tucci, Gutierrez and artist Jamal Igle.

continued on page 26

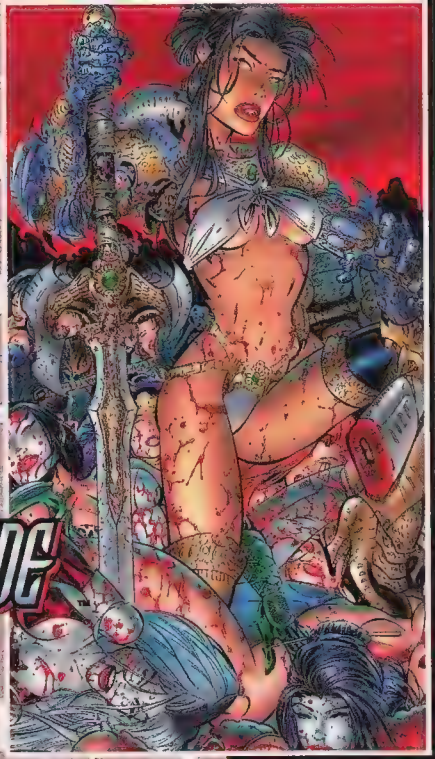
SOUND BITES

"I SUPPOSE I FEEL VERY SATISFIED NOW THAT THE WORK IS DONE."
—*Neil Gaiman on ending* Sandman *(Wizard #54, February 1996)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

AVENGELYNE

TOM SNIEGOSKI
ANDY PARK



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BYTE THIS!

One of comics' true founding fathers, **Will Eisner** joins "Wizard World" online on July 11 at 9:00-9:45 p.m. (EST). Take this rare opportunity to talk to one of comics' true artistic and spiritual leaders.

Now there's a new way to break into comics as a professional writer or artist! Veteran comics editor **Dave Campiti** hosts "Wizard World" 's "Breaking In" chatroom every other Thursday from 8:00-9:00 p.m. (EST). Campiti (featured in *Wizard* #49) helped expose some of today's hottest talents including **Mike Deodato** and **Roger Cruz**. Maybe *you* could be next!

If you happen to miss any of "Wizard World" 's chat events, the complete transcripts are available for download in the Picture Gallery in the folder "Stuff You Can Download" and on *Wizard*'s Web Page (http://www.wizardpress.com).

To hook up to "Wizard World" on America Online, call 800-754-4400. They'll send you free software and 10 hours free online. Keyword: Wizard.

"WIZARD WORLD" 'S CHAT SCHEDULES FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

MONDAY

- **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**
  Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST) July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & August 5, 12, 19, 26
- **Manga/Anime**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & August 5, 12, 19, 26
- **WildStorm**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) July 8, 22 & August 5, 19
- **Top Cow**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) July 1, 15, 29 & August 12, 26

TUESDAY

- **Wizard Unplugged with *Wizard*'s Editors**
  Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m. (EST) July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & August 6, 13, 20, 27
  Featuring: *Wizard* Editors Online: Pat McCallum, Andrew Kardon and Brian Cunningham
- **X-Men Trivia**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & August 6, 13, 20, 27
  Featuring: X-Pert Benny Powell

WEDNESDAY

- **Asteriod X Club (X-Men)**
  Time: 6-7 p.m. (EST) July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 & August 7, 14, 21, 28
- **Crusade Chat** July 10, 24 & August 7, 21
  Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST)
- **Trivia Chat**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) July 10, 24 & August 7, 21
  Featuring: *Wizard* Freelancer: Matt Brady
- **Avengers Assemble**
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 & August 7, 14, 21, 28

THURSDAY

- **InQuest Chat**
  Time: 7-8 p.m. (EST) July 4, 11, 18, 25 & August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
  Featuring: Rick Moscatello
- **Breaking In**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) July 11, 25 & August 8, 15, 29
  Featuring: David Campiti
- **Manga/Anime**
  Time: 12-1 a.m. (EST) July 4, 11, 18, 25 & August 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

FRIDAY

- **LOOP** (Legion of OverPower, Marvel CCG)
  Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST) July 5, 12, 19, 26 & August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

SATURDAY

- **Fantastic Four Club**
  Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST) July 6, 13, 20, 27 & August 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

SUNDAY

- **Sandman100 Comic Book Chat**
  Time: 8-10 p.m. (EST) July 7, 14, 21, 28 & August 4, 11, 18, 25
  Featuring: Don Lisk

To join *Wizard*'s e-mail list, drop an e-mail to WizEmail@aol.com. You'll get news flashes and cool information every week directly from *Wizard*.

■ Buddy Scalera (WizardTGTC@aol.com)

company updates

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DARK HORSE COMICS

July's *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—The Golden Age of the Sith* #0 is a 99-cent prequel to the five-issue mini-series of the same title, scheduled to premiere in October (each at $2.50)....Dark Horse is celebrating its 10-year anniversary with a four-issue mini-series featuring all-new stories called *A Decade of Dark Horse*, including Frank Miller's Sin City and Matt Wagner's Grendel...August sees *Grendel: Devil's Legacy* #1 (of 12), reprinting the first 12 issues of Comico's 1986 series....June sees the new manga *Blade of the Immortal* by Hiroaki Samura....Dark Horse will release the late Burne Hogarth's final work in July's *Marphos the Shapechanger*, the first issue of an uncompleted mini-series....An all-new *Tarzan* ongoing begins in July....Trade paperbacks for September include *Star Wars: Heir to the Empire*, *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* and *Rocketeer: Cliff's New York Adventure*.

DC COMICS

If you haven't already, check out *Aztek: The Ultimate Man*, DC's new ongoing series which debuted in June, by the *Skrull Kill Krew* writing team of Grant Morrison and Mark Millar....The Matrix sci-fi imprint has changed its name to Helix.

ENTITY COMICS

In August, Matt Martin and Trent Kaniuga bring you *Matt Martin & Trent Kaniuga's How to Draw Comics...The Wrong Way* #1, a parody of the top-selling Marvel book *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way*.

EVENT COMICS

Look for a two-issue *22 Brides/Ash* crossover this fall, as writer Fabian Nicieza and artist Humberto Ramos team the hero and heroines up against vampire dino-riders.

FIREMAN PRESS

Drywall's mysterious origin is uncovered in *Drywall: Unzipped*, as Scud's sidekick discovers that he may be responsible for the wildness in Scud's life. The full-color one-shot ships in September.

HARRIS COMICS

Mark Millar (*Swamp Thing*) writes August's *Vampirella Strikes* #6, which also sees the return of artist Louis Small Jr., and Vampi hunting down a bunch of whacked-out female vampires in Northern Russia.

HIGH IMPACT STUDIOS

This July, *Double Impact* (vol. 2) #1 comes your way in two versions: a regular cover for $3 and a deluxe chromium cover for $4. It sports artwork from some top industry names, including Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, Nelson and Amanda Conner.

HOMAGE COMICS

August sees *Strangers in Paradise* (vol. 3) #1 in full color, which takes place before the first volume of *SiP*, so you get to see Francine and Katchoo growing up....Look for the *SiP* gang to show up somewhere in *Gen*[13] #13.

IMAGE COMICS

• EXTREME STUDIOS

Writer Alan Moore makes his Supreme debut in August with *Supreme* #41 ($2.50)...*Blindside* #1 ($2.50) follows the action-packed world of superspy Michael Kemp, as Marat Mychaels co-writes and co-pencils....Get the original *Youngblood: Strikefile* series (issues #1-#4) in the *Youngblood: Strikefile Trade Paperback* ($12.95).

• TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

McFarlane fans may have missed Todd's latest appearance in the

continued on page 28

SOUND BITES

"*SHI*'S OUTSELLING SUPERMAN AND BATMAN BOOKS. THAT'S WRONG. SUPERMAN'S BEEN AROUND FOR 60 YEARS. MY BOOK SHOULDN'T BE OUTSELLING SUPERMAN BOOKS."
—*Billy Tucci* (Wizard #56, April 1996)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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(ar kâ'nəm)n.
:A great secret or mystery of nature.
For untold ages, men have searched the world for the ancient truths, the mysteries of immortality, wealth, and power that lie shrouded in the mists of time and legend. But the greatest of all secrets, the ultimate fate of humanity and the world, has been kept by one man for 800 years. The secret–the nature of the Apocalypse. He knows the forces and events that will lead to the end, and he knows the day it will all come to be.
The day is no longer a mystery.
It is upon us.
The end is nigh, but the facts still remain hidden, and the man who holds the answers to the Apocalypse isn't telling.
He's smiling.
And waiting.
TOP COW™
The inaugural issue of COMICS
written/pencilled by Brandon Peterson
inked by Batt
BRANDO
BATT
Ashley
ARCANUM MATTHEW ROYALE & © 1996 Brandon Peterson. All Rights Reserved. 1996 TOP COW Productions Inc. All Rights Reserved.

NEWS BITES

First Defense Con Termed a Success

A two-day Defense Con was held May 11-12 to raise money for the **Comic Book Legal Defense Fund**, a comic-advocacy and free-speech organization. Oklahoma City was chosen as the site for the con due to the recent troubles encountered by Planet Comics, an Oklahoma City comic store. Creators **Brian Pulido**, **Peter David**, **Dave Sim** and more helped raise over $12,000 for the Fund. ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

l. to r.: Peter David, Susan Alston and Dave Sim

Archie Scribe Frank Doyle, Dead at 79

Frank Doyle, long-time **Archie Comics** writer, died in March at age 79. Doyle penned over 10,000 stories for Archie Comics. "To this day," said Archie Comics Managing Editor and Vice President Victor Gorelick, "no other Archie writer can come close to the sheer quantity and quality of his work." ■ *Ruth Morrison*

Ellis Leaves Excalibur

Writer **Warren Ellis** announced he is leaving ***Excalibur***, effective issue #103 in September, after a run of nearly two years on the X-book. Beginning in August, Ellis will concentrate his efforts on WildStorm's ***StormWatch*** and ***DV8***. ■ *JBL*

Joe Orlando Retires

Veteran artist and editor **Joe Orlando** retired from his position as vice-president creative director of **DC Comics** and associate publisher of ***Mad*** June 1. Orlando's career began in 1950 as an artist for EC Comics, which later began *Mad*. Orlando's first DC comics work was in 1965, as artist on *The Inferior Five*. He will continue as a freelance artist/consulting editor to *Mad* and consultant to DC Comics. ■ *PDO*

Onslaught Gets Website

Marvel launched an official Onslaught Website in May (www.onslaught.com) featuring images of every one of the character's appearances to date. Since Onslaught's identity was revealed—we now know he's **Prof. Charles Xavier**—the site now follows the battles between Marvel's superheroes and their greatest adversary ever. ■ *Glenn Haight*

Top Cow Adds Creator-Owned Property, Arcanum

Following the lead of Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee's creator-owned comic divisions, **Marc Silvestri's Top Cow** Productions Inc. has announced its first-ever creator-owned project—***Arcanum*** by **Brandon Peterson**. Having made its debut in the ***Medieval Spawn/Witchblade*** mini-series, *Arcanum* is slated for release this September. Peterson will write and pencil Arcanum, which will be based on the story of people from all over the Earth who are drawn into the struggle for the final fate of mankind and the world. ■ *GH*

Times Square Eyed for MarvelMania Restaurant

Marvel Comics has signed a deal with the owners of **Planet Hollywood** for a chain of **MarvelMania** restaurants, with one of the first set to open in New York's refurbished Times Square, according to published reports. The owner of the proposed site, a 23,000-square-foot former theater, confirmed that there was a letter of intent with Marvel and Planet Hollywood to develop the space. ■ *PDO*

BIG Acquires Hubbard Story for Comics

BIG Entertainment has acquired the rights to "The Crossroads," a story written by the late sci-fi writer **L. Ron Hubbard**. Hubbard is best known as the founder of the Church of Scientology. BIG will initially release the property as an illustrated novel with plans to license it to other media companies for various other entertainment outlets. ■ *PDO* W

company updates

continued from page 26

May 20 issue of *Forbes* magazine, in a story titled "Getting Rich Outside Corporate America."...Learn everything there is to know about Spawn in August's *Spawn Bible* #1, written by McFarlane with art by Greg Capullo....Spawn finally comes face-to-hideous-face with his creator, the Malebolgia, in *Spawn* #53, this August!

• TOP COW

The Witchblade Collected Edition—Volume 3 ($4.95), coming in September, collects *Witchblade* issues #5-#6 for the first time and also features an exclusive "Making of Witchblade" sketchbook section....Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's Ash guest-stars in September's *Cyberforce* #27 ($2.50).

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

August is Crow Month at Kitchen Sink, tying in to the theatrical release of "The Crow: City of Angels." You'll find four new Crow posters, as well as baseball caps, keychains, stickers, T-shirts and postcard set....Collecting some of R. Crumb's most memorable comic strips and characters (such as Mr. Natural and Mr. Snoid), *Carload O' Comics* ships in August for $18.95....Trina Robbins tackles female heroes in *The Great Women Superheroes* shipping in August for $21.95.

LIGHTNING COMICS

Two major releases hit in August: *Bobby Joe & Nitro* #1, starring the weird friends of Lightning's gun-toting valley girl Moxi, and *Kunoichi* #1, introducing a four-girl ninja team.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

August's major crossover *Morbid Angel/Razor: Soul Search* #1 leads into September's new Razor series....*Razor Uncut* #25 celebrates the antiheroine's fourth anniversary....That month's *Demonique* #0 brings adult manga to London Night.

MARVEL COMICS

Upcoming X-mini-series include *Magneto*, *Mystique/Sabretooth*, *X.S.E. Xavier Security Forces* (featuring Bishop's earlier days), *X-Men: Pryde & Wisdom* (with Kitty Pryde and Pete Wisdom), *X-Men vs. Brood: Day of Wrath* (tying up loose ends from *Uncanny X-Men* #232-#234) and *Rise of Apocalypse*....Pick up *The Road to Onslaught* ($2.50) in August, featuring a look at the creative process behind this new X-foe....The sex of Peter and Mary Jane's baby is revealed in *Sensational Spider-Man* #9 ($1.95)...Peter David and Mike Deodato Jr. team up for a 48-page one-shot, *Incredible Hulk: Hercules Unleashed* ($2.50), as the Avengers are missing, and everyone blames the Hulk....Cable and company collide with Shaft and his squad in *X-Force/Youngblood* ($4.95), as Youngblood returns to join X-Force in a war against the retired maniac Mojo.

MAXIMUM PRESS

Priest #1 ($2.99) debuts in August, telling the tale of a priest by day who turns into a vigilante at night....*Avengelyne/Glory II: War of the Gods* ($2.99) ships with a special photo variant.

PENTHOUSE COMIX

Penthouse Comix #15 continues Richard Corben's "Denz," starring the third generation of the writer/artist's character Den.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

Primal Rage, the four-issue mini-series based on the video game, has been delayed until August....The three-issue *Demongate* mini-series gets an ongoing series with #4 in August.

TOPPS COMICS

August's *X-Files Annual* #2, by John Rozum and Charles Adlard, has a respected obstetrician believing he's a target of aliens that plan to kidnap his pregnant patients. Is he right or just nuts?

SOUND BITES

"WE LISTEN TO OUR FANS AND THEY HAVE SPOKEN. IT'S BACK TO BASICS. WE ARE RIGHT NOW DEVELOPING A STORYLINE WHERE WE ARE GOING TO PUT PETER PARKER BACK INTO A SPIDER-MAN COSTUME."
—*Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras (Wizard #57, May 1996)*

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Howard Chaykin
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Christopher Hinz
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Lucius Shepard
Al Davison
Monthly

BLOODY MARY
Garth Ennis
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Four-issue miniseries

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Timothy Truman
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Look out below!
Here comes Risk!

TEEN SPIRIT

Dan Jurgens banks on a new generation of teen heroes to breathe life into his Teen Titans relaunch

by Jack Curtin with John B. Lacey

THIS AIN'T NO JUNIOR JUSTICE LEAGUE.

As DC Comics places its brand-name superheroes in the impending *Justice League of America* title, Dan Jurgens is taking a different route with his *Teen Titans* relaunch this September. Instead of previous Titans incarnations, where popular teen sidekick characters like Robin, Kid Flash, Aqualad and Wonder Girl were staples in the team, Jurgens is opting for mostly all-new characters.

"I think part of the problem—especially in the early days—was that the Titans were always seen as a Junior Justice League, and seen as a #2 team at best," the writer/penciler says. "The Justice League should be DC's preeminent characters, but the Titans are different just because of the emphasis on the word 'teen,' which to me means youth and implies potential, and you can hit those high notes with new characters. The challenge of the writer is making the reader accept the new characters."

Jurgens further states his case by making a fair comparison to creators Marv Wolfman and George Pérez's work on *The New Teen Titans*, a title that went toe-to-toe with Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* during the 1980s. "When Marv and George did *Titans*, what really invigorated that book—and I can't emphasize this enough—was

TITANS

AMONG TEENS

"I think it was [DC Comics editor] George Kashdan who first said, 'How about a series starring the kid superheroes?' and that I later was the one who came up with the name Teen Titans," recalls Teen Titans co-creator Bob Haney, "but it was a long time ago."

1964, to be exact, when teen sidekicks Robin, Kid Flash and Aqualad teamed up for the first time. A year later the youthful heroes returned to the scene, this time with the addition of Wonder Girl, who had curiously never existed as Wonder Woman's sidekick (hey, those were simpler times). *Teen Titans* #1 debuted in 1966 and enjoyed a 43-issue, seven-year run.

Series artist Nick Cardy admits that he was not above playing a few favorites as he designed the book. "I had drawn the *Aquaman* book for a while," he chuckles, "so I had a soft spot in my heart for Aqualad, and I would always give him a boost by placing him as one of the strongest elements on the page. And I've always liked drawing pretty girls, so I paid special attention to Wonder Girl."

Though a Titans revival was attempted in 1976 (introducing Titans West, no less), it lasted two years. It seemed that the era of the teen heroes was over. Who could guess that the best was yet to come? ■ *JJC*

The new, younger Atom

not Kid Flash, Robin or Wonder Girl. It was the new characters: Cyborg, Raven and Starfire. By the same token, what I can have here is a core group of four new characters, one 'old' character in the Atom, plus an outer circle association with Robin and Impulse—but it is the new guys that give it a freshness it needs."

He adds that when using established teen heroes like Robin, Impulse, Superboy and the Ray, "character development becomes really impossible in a book like this. What you absolutely must have are characters who can really develop in this book."

And to develop the Teen Titans, Jurgens has turned to inker George Pérez, along for his second tour of Titans duty. "I know a good deal when I see one," Jurgens muses. "George has become a very important component in the potential success of this book. Right away, he brings a stylistic integrity to the book. George also brings to the book a high degree of credibility with Titans fans, just because of his past association with the team."

"It's like having Captain Kirk appear with the 'Next Generation' crew in 'Star Trek: Generations,' " quips *Teen Titans* editor Eddie Berganza.

AND WHO ARE THESE NEW CHARACTERS? The line-up consists of Risk (who has enhanced speed and strength), Slag (heat-based powers), Argent (projects energy bolts) and Prysm (can absorb light, project light blasts and travel at the speed of light). (See sidebar for Jurgens' comments on each.)

And then there's the Atom, a Silver Age DC character who went from thirtysomething to teenager in *Zero Hour* two years ago. The shrinking hero will be team leader, and Jurgens is looking forward to him being in the Titans. "The Atom has always been fairly conservative both socially and politically, and now he's a kid again. He appears to be 17, even though he's really in his mid-30s, and has been married and divorced," says Jurgens. "How is he going to handle that?"

Jurgens believes the Atom (a.k.a. Ray Palmer) is a pleasant throwback to the heroes of yesterday. "He becomes a DC Silver Age character that's preserved in a way, and need not become a dark, brooding character like many Silver Age characters have become. Hal Jordan has gone nuts, Aquaman is a hermit that lives under the sea, Hawkman is...well, you figure it out."

"THIS SERIES IS ABOUT a sense of growth with all these characters and how they come together," Jurgens says. "I really want to get back to the idea of comics where readers see the characters grow and develop."

The first three-issue arc, he says, deals with the story of the teen heroes coming together to form the Titans. "At that point what they start to deal with is the idea that here we are, we're a group of kids who have never had powers before. It becomes the story of 'Are we heroes? And if we are, why? What are our powers? Gee, do we really go out and fight people?' Just because you have powers doesn't mean that you become a hero and fight bad guys. We will find out that there is a very specific reason why these heroes choose to become a family of sorts."

After that, expect an alien invasion story that will be presented in a different way, explains editor Berganza. "We don't even see the aliens for a long way into the story," he says, "but instead learn how frightening they are because of the way that other characters, even Darkseid, are alarmed by their imminent approach."

The aliens in question are the H'San Natall, a threat to the entire DC Universe. As it turns out, the four new Titans (as well as future Titans we have yet to see) are all half-human and half-H'San Natall. "The H'San Natall is picking on Earth because it's got great commodities to exploit and conquer," says Berganza. "As readers will see, they've picked Earth women to do their experiments with and create new meta-humans."

There's also the threat of a secret worldwide organization known as The Veil revealed at the end of issue #4. Says Berganza, "The Veil is the exact opposite of the H'San Natall. They believe in 'humans only' on Earth. As Dan puts it: If all these aliens are running around Earth and you look at the real world with all these race problems, the racism in the DC Universe would really be upscaled when green men who can shapeshift exist as do Kryptonians that can fly." Expect The Veil to affect the DC Universe in a bigger way somewhere down the road, as the Titans and other alien heroes come under investigation.

AND JURGENS DOESN'T DISCOUNT guest appearances by established DC characters during the first year's worth of Titans tales. Aside from the veteran hero Wildcat, who becomes the Titans' mentor, expect appearances by Robin, as well as Nightwing, who pops up "just to give the new guys his blessing," says Jurgens.

Also, a very mysterious, cloak-shrouded character known as Omen shows up early on, and if that character seems strongly reminiscent of Titan-gone-villainess Raven, who helped bring together the last version of the Titans, Jurgens will only say, "We'll see."

And an older Titans mainstay, Mr. Jupiter—the financier who once helped an earlier Titans team

SOUND BITES

"THE BOTTOM LINE IS: JIM SHOOTER GAVE EVERYBODY THE DEFINITIVE AVENGERS AND LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. I'M HOPING HE CAN GIVE ME THE DEFINITIVE YOUNGBLOOD."

—*Rob Liefeld on the mythical team-up with Shooter (Wizard #32, April 1994)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

stay afloat—is back to pay the bills. For that matter, Jurgens asserts, anyone who ever appeared in the earlier Titans series is part of the vast tapestry he will draw upon to tell his story. "This is a new team, young and fresh," he claims, "but they are also part of a long and important tradition."

But that tradition will be given a '90s spin, as Jurgens is confident *Teen Titans* will compete in a market with other popular teen books like *Gen*[13] and *Generation X*. "I start with the characters first," he notes, on his formula for success. "They are characters first, superpowered characters second. Let's build characters we can get to know first, and fill in the rest later. Second, so many of the other 'teen' books are just big guys with big muscles and women with big breasts. This is not that type of book. If it is, *TT* is not the book for you. Third, I'm hopefully trying to build a backdrop to the DC Universe that is really the bonding agent that brings these kids together. By the end of the first ish there's a mystery in place, a powerful, mysterious background that also becomes a threat to the entire DC Universe. We want to build this book to make it both fun and a little complex at the same time. It's an interesting challenge, and we'll see what we can come up with." W

Jack Curtin is a non-powered, half-alien writer from Generation W and the race E'cnal Eerf.

TITANS ROLL CALL

HERE'S A LOOK AT THE NEW CHARACTERS THAT DAN JURGENS IS INTRODUCING IN SEPTEMBER'S *TEEN TITANS* #1, IN HIS OWN WORDS.

RISK

"Cody Driscoll is loose, flamboyant and bored stiff by school and other aspects of everyday life. And he's hyper, in the truest sense of the word. His abilities are increased over those of the average person by a multiple of five: five times the speed, five times the strength and five times the ability to get into trouble. I could see him emerging as the real star of the book, and he's certainly a character who is very different from the Atom, which should prove interesting."

SLAG

"Isiah Crockett has heat-based powers. He can do incredible things with waves of heat and, when he's touching it, he can even melt steel or concrete with his bare hands. In many ways, he is the most stable and 'normal' member of the group, because the last thing I wanted to write was yet another sullen black youth from the ghetto. Isiah is very solid middle-class, with a very healthy family relationship."

ARGENT

"Toni Moretti comes from a very wealthy family, one where material things have been more important than love and understanding. She seems bright and happy and perky, but she is really very lonely and isolated. Her power is the ability to create and fire plasma energy bolts that become instantly tangible."

PRYSM

"Audrey Spears comes from the most bizarre family situation of all, in that she did not grow up on Earth, but was raised by aliens in a controlled atmosphere, something like living in a 'Brady Bunch' or other sitcom world. She can capture and reflect light, fire light beams and travel at light speed. By emptying her body of light, she can become nearly invisible. She is potentially the most powerful of all the Titans." ■ *JJC*

NEW TEEN AGE

All George Pérez wanted to do in 1980 was draw the Justice League.

But to do that, he agreed to one creative pit stop: DC's *New Teen Titans*, joining writer Marv Wolfman.

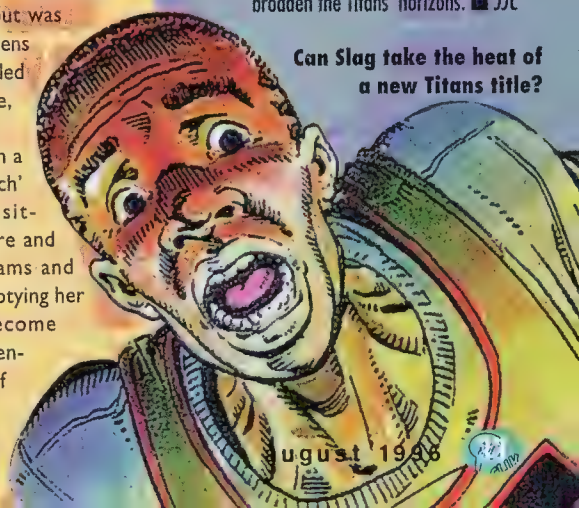
"Marv had left Marvel to go over to DC," Pérez remembers, "and he asked me to help him revive the Teen Titans. My first thought was that a new book would last maybe six months, and the second was that this could lead to a chance to do the JLA. Pretty soon, though, Marv's enthusiasm won me over, just like it did the folks at DC."

"I had written some Titans stories during the first series and really liked the concept," says Wolfman. "I thought that a high-action book with solid characterization, including several new characters [Starfire, Changeling, Cyborg and Raven] would work. As soon as I saw George's character sketches, I knew that we had something special that would move past the old Titans and become something brand-new."

Even Wolfman didn't anticipate the tidal wave of success. After being introduced in *DC Comics Presents* #26 in October 1980, the revamped Titans debuted in their own title a month later. *The New Teen Titans* (renamed *The New Titans* in 1988) quickly became DC's best-selling title, a pace it maintained for most of the decade, becoming the most successful team book this side of its rival, namely Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men*. (The two teams actually met in *Marvel and DC Present: X-Men/New Teen Titans* #1 in 1982.)

One of the several classic stories that are still talked about today is "Who Is Donna Troy?" (issue #38), while "The Judas Contract" story (*Tales of the New Teen Titans* #42-#44, *Annual* #3), featuring the re-introduction of Nightwing, the debut of Jericho and the treachery of Terra, is probably the most popular of the title's run.

The New Titans was one of those books that never seemed to regain a focus in the post-*Crisis on Infinite Earths* DC Universe and died a merciful death last December. The gauntlet was thrown, waiting for another brave soul to pick it up and broaden the Titans' horizons. ■ *JJC*



Can Slag take the heat of a new Titans title?

Wizard casts the Hulk movie!

Casting call

Talk about a cool movie that's ripe for the making. The Incredible Hulk's got the perfect horror/superhero concept: Jekyll and Hyde meet the atomic age. Dr. Bruce Banner gets bombarded by radiation and, when agitated, transforms into a rampaging green-skinned behemoth. You can't get much better than that! Toss in a love interest that Banner'll probably never be able to hold onto, her obsessive father that wants to destroy his secret alter ego and the fact that Banner now has to hide in order to protect those he loves.

Pretty cool, eh?

In this movie, we'll take the savage green Hulk and mix him with both the current supporting cast and some of the more popular cast members from his past.

So who'd be our dream cast? Walk this way…

THE HULK

Hey, why mess with success? The original live-action Hulk in the "Incredible Hulk" TV series, Lou Ferrigno is still massive enough to do a great Hulk.

DR. BRUCE BANNER

For Banner, we need someone who's brainy-looking and courageous, and who can look almost haunted. David Duchovny ("The X-Files") fits the bill.

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers All photos: Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.

SOUND BITES

"IMAGE, BY VIRTUE OF ITS SUCCESS, SHOWED THAT THE CREATORS ARE NOT AS EASILY REPLACED AS THE PUBLISHERS ONCE BELIEVED."
—*Marc Silvestri (Wizard #30, February 1994)*

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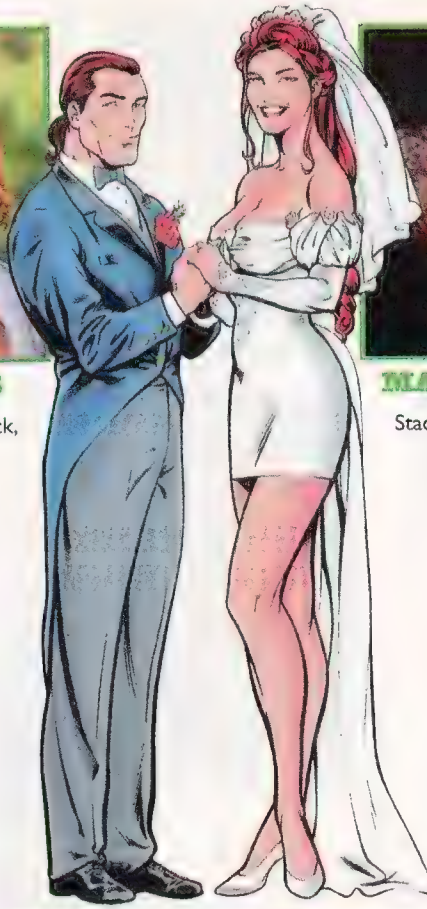


RICK JONES

For the Hulk's sidekick, we needed someone adventurous and yet kinda dopey. Johnny Depp ("Don Juan DeMarco," "Nick of Time") is our man.

MARLO JONES

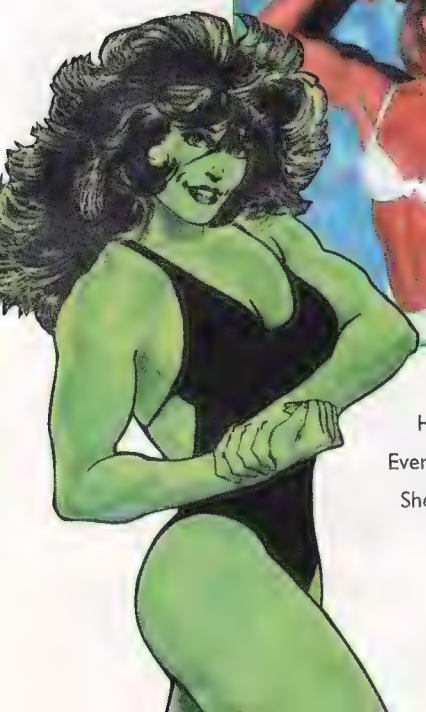
Stacy Haiduk ("Kindred: The Embraced," "Superboy") would be perfect for the perfect redhead.

BETTY BANNER

Sandra Bullock ("The Net") has the right personality to bring Betty Banner to life.

ABOMINATION

The yin to Hulk's yang would be pretty neat if played by Ralph Moeller ("Best of the Best 2").



SHE-HULK

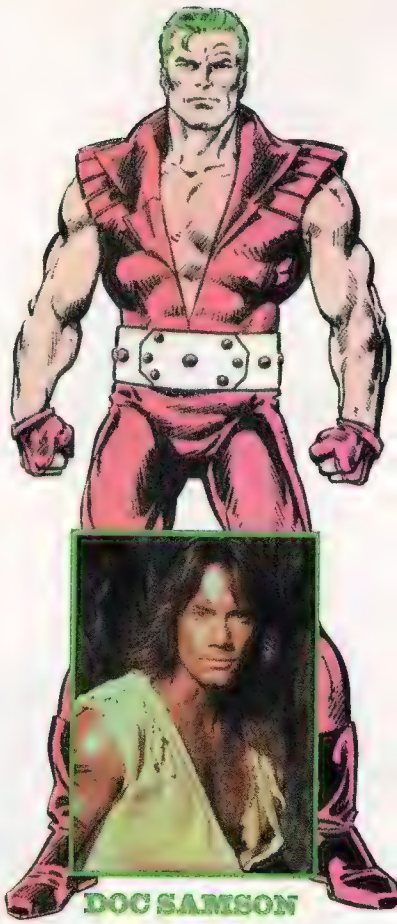
Hey, bodybuilder Cory Everson is supposed to be She-Hulk in an upcoming telefilm, so who are we to argue?

THE LEADER

Alan Rickman ("Die Hard," "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves") would be great as the Hulk's arch-nemesis. We're kinda partial to the jiffy-pop head from a couple years ago.

GENERAL "THUNDERBOLT" ROSS

Seymour Cassel ("Indecent Proposal") would be perfect as the crazy general who will stop at nothing to destroy the Hulk.



DOC SAMSON

Nice guy Kevin Sorbo ("Hercules: The Legendary Journeys") is a great pick as the green-haired psychiatrist/adventurer.

VECTOR

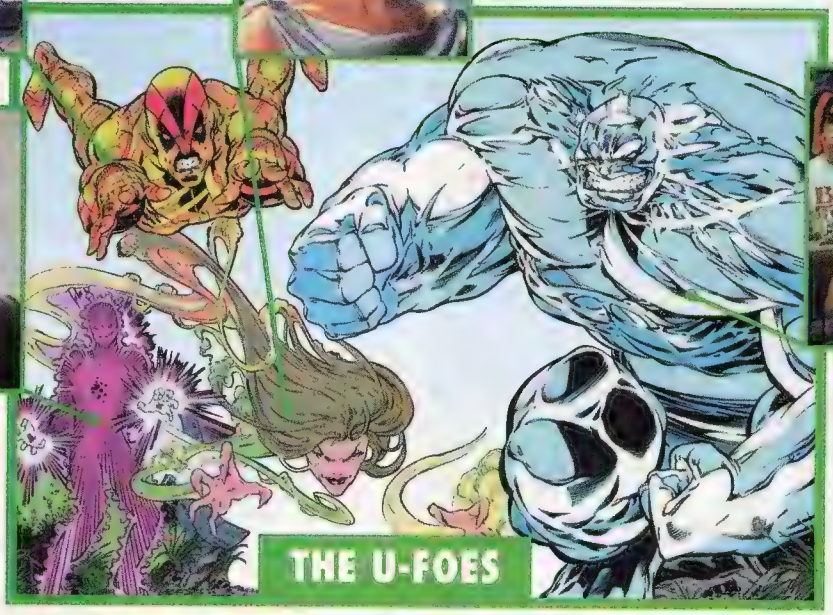
The leader of the U-Foes has Corbin Bernsen ("L.A. Law") written all over him.

VAPOR

Marcia Cross, who is perfectly diabolical every week on "Melrose Place," is a terrific match for the U-Foes' vixen.

X-RAY

This young upstart of the U-Foes would be portrayed by Matthew Perry ("Friends").



THE U-FOES

IRONCLAD

Andrew Bryniarski ("The Program") is a super choice for the U-Foes' strong man. W

SOUND BITES

"...IT WASN'T A PENIS, IT WAS JUST A FOLD ON THE BACK OF HIS ARM, AND IT JUST HAPPENED TO LOOK LIKE A PENIS."

—*Simon Bisley defending the cover of* Lobo's Back #2 *(Wizard #31, March 1994)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years.

WHAT IT TAKES №27

What's it take to make a great comic book?

JUSTICE.

NEIL GAIMAN'S

Lady JUSTICE

BIG ENTERTAINMENT

FIRST LOOK

SPAWN

TODD McFARLANE'S COMIC BOOK HERO GETS ANIMATED THIS WINTER ON HBO

"IN THE BEST CASE SCENARIO, I HOPE IT'S SO DARK that people will have to watch it with the lights off," says Todd McFarlane of the forthcoming "Spawn" animated series on HBO, based on his popular Image comic series.

Set to debut in early 1997, McFarlane's latest Spawn project brings Al Simmons to the small screen for the first time in an animated series destined to blow the socks off of Spawn fans everywhere. "To me, its like doing an animated drama," reveals the character's creator, who is busy overseeing the series, produced and directed by Eric Radomski, a noted animator on "Batman: The Animated Series." Screenwriter Alan McElroy rounds out the primary creative team. Additionally, McFarlane and fellow comics veteran Alan Moore have contributed scripts for the show's initial airing.

McFarlane promises an animated "Spawn" far from any Saturday morning cartoon, complete with dark, moody animation, as well as mature language and themes—just like the stories that have made the *Spawn* comic so popular. To inaugurate the series, the show's writers have cooked up a story arc involving child murderer Billy Kincaid—in a slight departure from the comic's continuity—now the son of a U.S. Senator. "The focus is that if someone was in power, could that person get away with killing kids?" says McFarlane. *Spawn* fans need not worry about other series regulars—Angela, the Violator, Chapel and all the other cast members will be appearing in the cartoon series.

Voicing the animated "Spawn" will be the gravelly-voiced actor Keith David, seen most recently in "Clockers" and HBO's "The Grave." Noted Hollywood stars Ronny Cox and Richard Dysart are also on the cast list, which includes a plethora of voice talents covering the gamut from animation to stage and screen—all personally approved by McFarlane for the roles. "This is about being true to the characters and doing stories that I think are cool," he says unabashedly. "And if that means only three people get to see it, and I'm one of them, that's enough for me." W

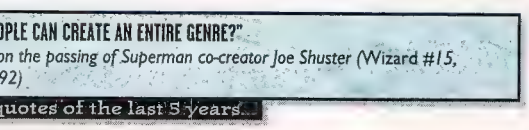
Top: Cyan
Above: the animated "Spawn"

Scott Beatty, who did a ton of work for Wizard's Spawn Special, is so dark that people will have to watch him with the lights off.

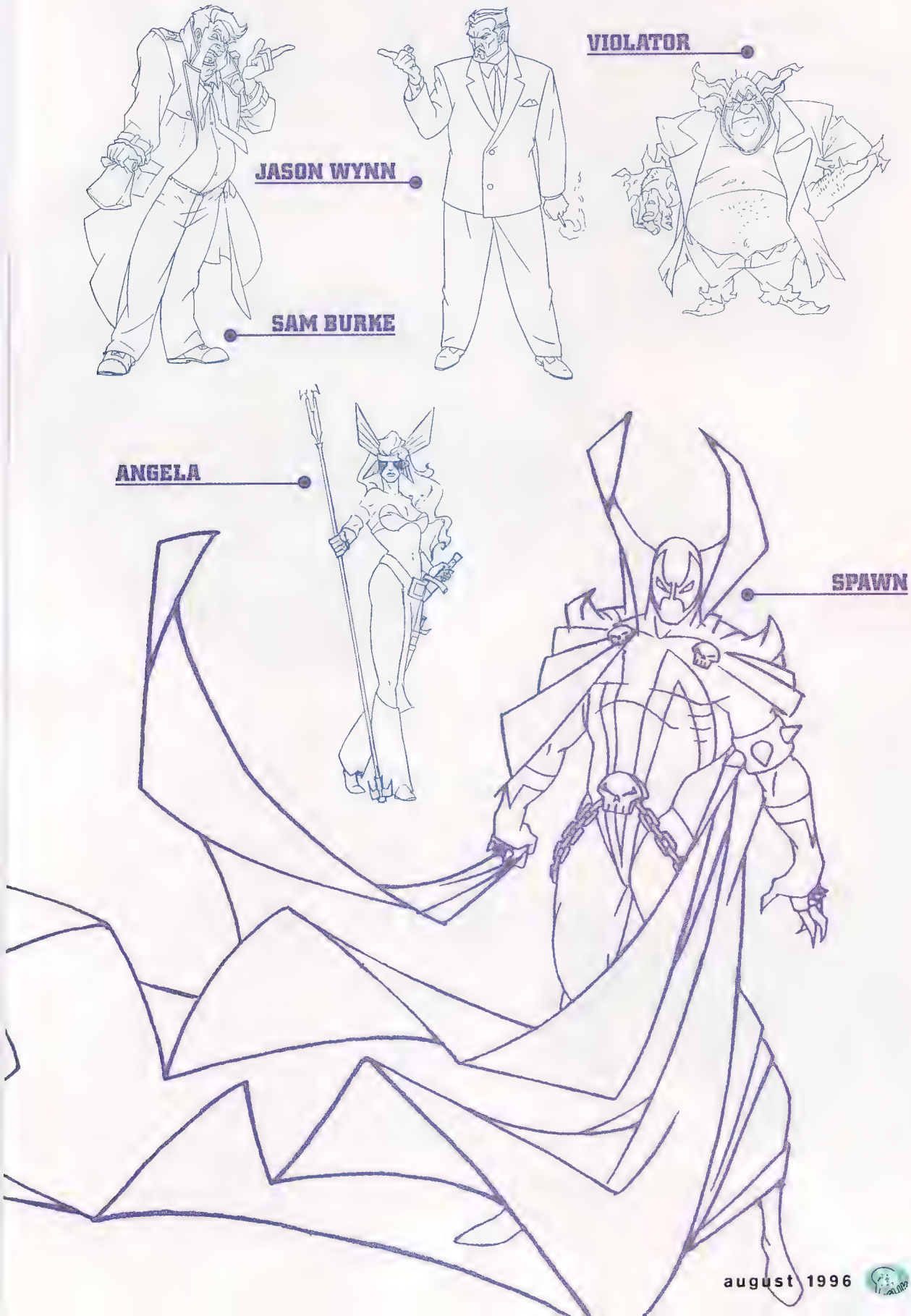
BY SCOTT BEATTY

VITAL STATS

WHO?
Spawn
WHAT?
HBO's "Spawn" animated series
DEBUT?
Late January/early February 1997 on HBO
WHAT'S THE DEAL?
This marks Spawn's animated debut in a mature, adult-themed series, kicking off a year that will also include a "Spawn" motion picture.



SPAWN CHARACTER SKETCHES



SHOOT TO HURT

Above: Our boy Scud
Below: His buddy Drywall

Rob Schrab's kooky robot Scud is an assassin with a problem: if he kills, he dies

By Craig Shutt

Rob Schrab is a victim of love. And when the woman of his dreams ripped out his heart and stomped it into the sidewalk, he trudged home and wallowed in his pain for a while. Then he created Scud, a disposable robot assassin who battles the most bizarre creatures this side of a Saturday morning cartoonist's fever dream.

"Scud is an allegory for me trying to overcome my personal problems," Schrab admits. "I'm exorcising my demons."

It looks more like he's exercising his demons. Scud's main antagonist looks like a bunch of random body parts with an electric plug for its head, mouths in its knees, and a squid strapped to its chest. Oh, yeah, its name is Jeff. Another villain seems to be a giraffe in cowboy boots with a flying saucer for a noggin.

Scud: The Disposable Assassin, a black-and-white self-published book, teems with crazy energy, producing wackier characters and scenarios every issue.

February's issue #11, for instance, wound up a year-long plot thread in which Scud's right arm went into the shop for repairs, and the human "loaner" he was given turned out to belong to a werewolf. The werewolf, in fact, was an astronaut who stole Scud's arm after it was fixed, ultimately forcing Scud to rocket into space and track the werewolf down.

"I have no idea where this stuff comes from," Schrab, 26, reveals. "It's almost like aliens are beaming these ideas into my brain. People ask me what drugs I'm on, but listen, I couldn't do this stuff on any drug. There's a deep psychosis involved here."

Actually, what's involved here is a cataclysmic love thang. In 1993, Schrab and the woman of his dreams had a difference of opinion. "I was ga-ga over her, and she thought I was a psychotic stalker," he reflects. "She told me to forget it, that it wasn't going to happen. I was completely shattered; I lost all my confidence. I became just a shell of a man, walking around with my knuckles dragging on the ground, bumping into walls. I needed a role model to get myself going again."

After renting every gangster, cowboy and ninja movie ever made, he turned for solace to his high-school love of comics. "All I saw were these big guys with clenched teeth who were flexing, while Batman was sitting on a church tower crying," he relates. "I didn't want to cry anymore; I wanted someone who was going to laugh in the face of danger. So I came up with a comic book for me. Instead of a big, muscle-bound character, I have a skinny, streamlined, bright-yellow robot."

Scud—part of the "Heart Breaker" line of robot assassins, specifically Series 1373—is given the orders to kill Jeff, the aforementioned monster who becomes Scud's lifelong arch-enemy. It gains that distinction when Scud inadvertently learns that disposable robot assassins self-destruct after making their kill. Seeing a loophole, Scud severely maims Jeff and becomes a mercenary robot killer, taking on assignments to pay Jeff's mind-boggling hospital bills. But then Jeff gets better, and comes looking for the robot.

"The underlying theme of Scud is that the worst thing about a person often is what makes them an original," Schrab explains. "Lots of people are self-conscious because they see the world around them as the way things should be, and when they don't fit into that, they figure they're wrong. But that's actually what makes them more original than anyone else."

Scud fits that idea perfectly, Schrab says. "He's an original, and he's sticking through it. Sure, he's got a huge monster that hates him, and he can't fight back because if he kills Jeff, he kills himself. But that's what makes him unique—without the monster, he has no purpose to his life, no originality. He'd be like any other Scud robot."

The human-arm story brought out more of that personality, the creator points out. "Scud [went] through some weird soul-searching with that arm, like Data does [on 'Star Trek: The Next Generation']." Data always bemoans that he can't laugh, and I think that's a bad message. You should be happy about who you are. Scud realized that it's cool to be a robot, and he's happy to be one."

Schrab honed the comedic sensibilities he brings to *Scud* while he was an art student at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design. He began performing stand-up comedy in his senior year at the local Comedy Sports franchise, where he joined a comedy troupe called the Dead Alewives. The group includes Mondy Carter and Dan Harmon, who collaborate on Scud's writing. It also features Peter Alberts, who serves as business manager for Fireman Press, Schrab's self-publishing company. "We know each other's timing because we write and perform together," Schrab says. "Improv can be a lot like a comic book, because you develop a plot and work through it. We're all performers and

"I have no idea where this stuff comes from. It's almost like aliens are beaming these ideas into my brain."
—Rob Schrab

Scud's got a problem: the minute he kills Jeff (top), he self-destructs

wisecrackers to some degree."

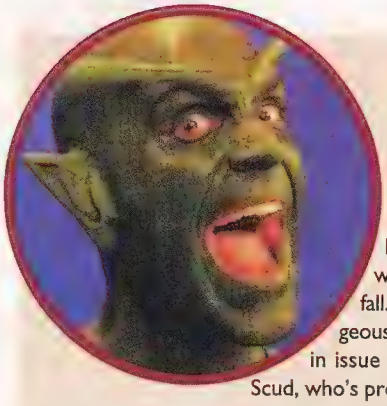
That improv style is apparent in Scud's approach to comedy, he says. "We don't write jokes for Scud. We try to replicate a genre, such as a gangster movie, and combine that with another genre, like Japanese anime's giant robots. The jokes come from merging odd elements, not from writing one-liners."

Scud's visual development was a short process, Schrab adds. "I think I drew one picture, and that's how he ended up." The cover of issue #1, in fact, came from the second drawing of Scud he'd ever done. "I wrote all of the first issue, but once the other guys saw the final product, it was easy to get them involved." Schrab designs the characters with input from the others. "Dan will tell me an idea he has for a character, then I adapt him to Scud's world. Actually, I basically molest him."

The creator's art focuses on fast action and plenty of chaotic panels. "My influences are in movies and animation more than comics," he explains. "I like to 'animate' the story so your eye follows the action without having to read the text. But lately, it's getting harder to do that because the stories are becoming so complicated."

Schrab initially planned to turn Scud into an animated short, "but I didn't have the people, time or money to do even a five-minute piece. So I figured I'd do it as a comic book but storyboard it so I could take the pages and animate them." To inject more of an animation sensibility, he started voice-casting each part with issue #2. "If I can put it into the readers' heads that this could be a cartoon, I've moved it closer to being something that could happen."

In fact, Schrab has signed a developmental movie deal with Oliver Stone's Ixtlan production house. But specific plans remain tentative, right down to whether it will be animated or live-action. "We've got a ways to go," he says. "But I'm encouraged about its prospects."



FUTURE TENSE

Starting in June, creator Rob Schrab (left) begins to explore Scud's world in a much more involved way. "We'll make some things a little more obvious," he hints. Issue #13 will be tied into Drywall's spinoff, currently planned for the fall. Also showing up will be Sussudio, a gorgeous Comkilserv assassin who first appeared in issue #10. She's been assigned to eliminate Scud, who's proven to be less than a model employee. "She's our first major female character, and she'll become a major presence," Schrab promises. "She'll be interacting with Scud on a new level."

Following up on the release of the *Heavy 3PO* trade paperback, which collects the first four issues, Schrab is considering a collection for the human-arm story arc from #5-#11. He may also follow up the color reprint of #1 with more color work. "I liked the color issue a lot, but I haven't had time to think about it," he admits. "Last year I did five books; this year I'd done four by April. It's a lot of work." ■*CS*

[You should be able to find Scud at your local comic shop, but if you're having trouble, you can contact Fireman Press at 2430 N. Humboldt, Milwaukee WI 53212, e-mail them at scud@earth.execpc.com or visit the Web page at http://www.execpc.com/~scud.]

Scud's supporting cast remains small, owing to the robot's status as an outlaw assassin. It includes his buddy Drywall and Tony Tastey, a cybernetic gangster who first appeared in issue #2. "I love to create new characters, and I get attached to them after they appear," Schrab says. Tastey, for instance, was planned to be a one-shot character, "but I fell in love with him, so we brought him back in #4." Schrab enjoyed that adventure so much, in fact, that it led to last March's *La Cosa Nostroid* special.

He's planning a similar special for Drywall, Scud's lumpy and incomprehensible pal from Comkilserv, the assassins' bureau Scud joined to earn a few bucks. "I totally love this guy, and he's becoming more popular with readers," Schrab says. Drywall takes his name from the fact that his insides consist of thousands of small, roofless, well labeled rooms filled with parts and gadgets that he can use as weapons: baseball bats, arrows, fish, ties, chairs, hot tubs, etc. "The rooms are made out of drywall," Schrab says, as if that's a perfectly good explanation for the character's name.

"Drywall's name is one of those non sequiturs in *Scud* that are there only to underline the surrealism," he admits. Schrab stresses that "Scud's universe has no reality. Every character has something odd about him. They're unreal. Readers keep saying that certain parts aren't explained, and they're right. Scud lives in a chaotic world, but he's very casual about the chaos around him."

Schrab does know a lot of what's going on, though. "At some point, to keep the plots interesting, we'll go back and explain some of it," he says. "We'll explain why Drywall is what he is and why Scud seems to be at the center of everything that happens. Scud is a very important character in this world, and someday we'll let everybody know why. But for now, I'd rather just have fun with the character and the universe."

Craig Shutt, who caught up with Nexus last issue, lives in a chaotic world, and it just drives him crazy.

SOUND BITES

"I THINK AS LONG AS TWO PEOPLE PHYSICALLY HURT EACH OTHER, THERE'S ENORMOUS POSSIBILITY FOR ACCEPTANCE AMONG KIDS."

—*Sam Kieth on* The Maxx *(Wizard #20, April 1993)*

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Ready...Set...Draw!

With Scud: The Disposable Assassin

He ain't the Terminator, but when it comes to getting the job done, few assassins are more reliable than Scud: The Disposable Assassin. And none are more fun to draw!

So why don't you just take out a drawing tool and draw us up a Scud. Maybe you'd like to do the ol' reliable Heart Breaker Series 1373. Or perhaps you'd like to do an all-new model. Whatever you do, make it your best work, 'cause we here at *Wizard* will narrow the entries down to the best of the best and send 'em off to Scud creator Rob Schrab (he's the green guy at left), who will determine the winners of our...

...FRANK-FREE PRIZES!

Grand Prize (1):

One lucky winner will have his or her entry printed as a one-page pin-up in a future issue of *Scud: The Disposable Assassin!* And as if that's not enough, he or she will also get copies of *Scud: The Disposable Assassin* #1 (current printing) and the Scud trade paperback, Heavy 3PO, signed by Rob Schrab, plus a Scud T-shirt!

First Prize (10):

Ten lucky winners will each get a copy of *Scud: The Disposable Assassin* #1 (current printing) signed by Rob Schrab and a Scud T-shirt.

Second Prize (25):

Twenty-five lucky winners will each get a copy of Heavy 3PO signed by Rob Schrab.

This month's contest is sponsored by Fireman Press, owners of at least three Franks.

Legal Contract

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Fireman Press and their immediate families or Siskel and Ebert. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach it to your art entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Ready...Set...Draw! Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. In Frank We Trust. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by August 30, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on quality and creativity from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press and Fireman Press. Judging will take place on September 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after September 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Ready...Set...Draw! Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this sucker out, attach it to your entry, put it in an envelope and send it off to: Ready...Set...Draw! Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is August 30, 1996.

Ready...Set...Draw!

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Name _____ Date of Birth _____

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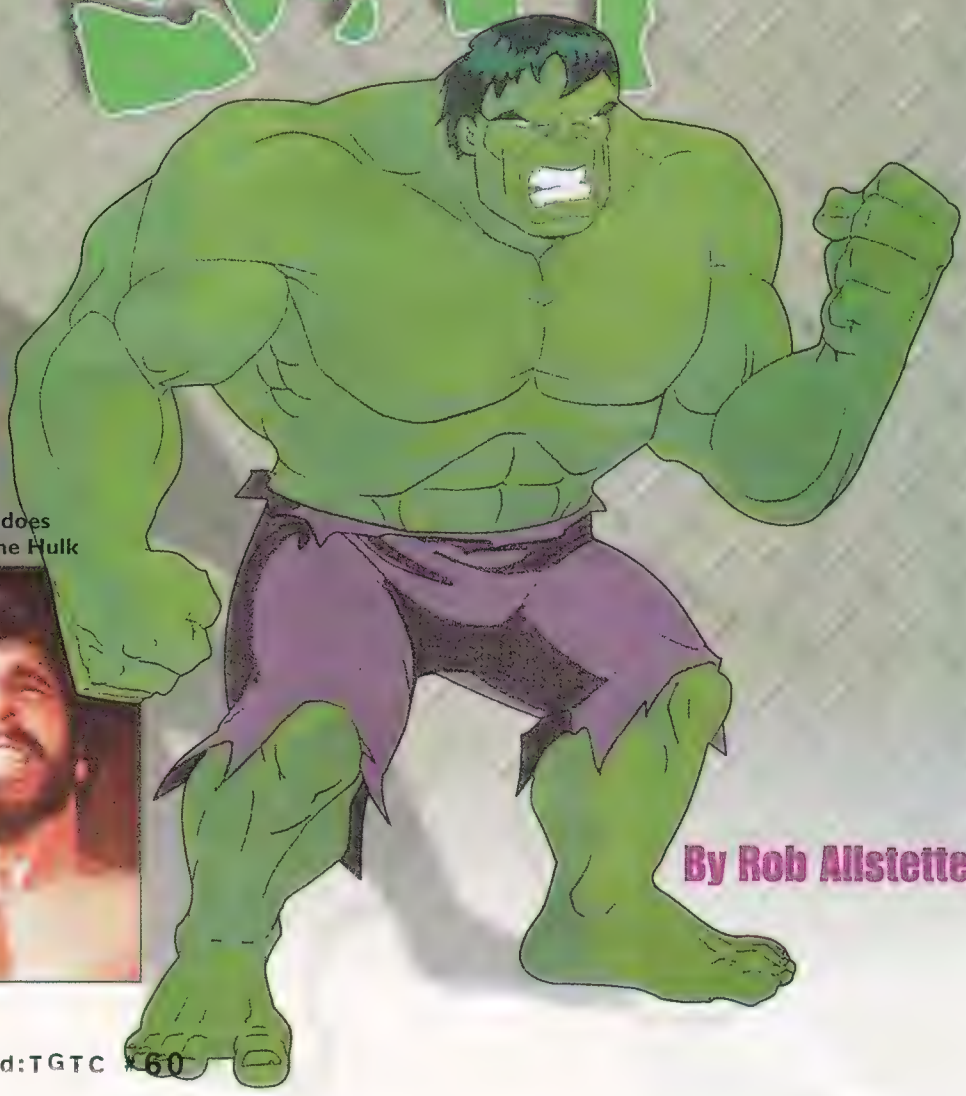
Did you attach your entry?

GREEN DAY



Lou Ferrigno does the voice of the Hulk

By Rob Allstetter

Hulk animated series clobbers its way to the top spot of UPN's Sunday morning lineup

Want a monster hit? Turn to a monster who can really hit. After the "X-Men" and "Spider-Man" series swept up Saturday morning ratings, Marvel's next animated network endeavor could be a smash—quite literally—on Sunday mornings.

"The Incredible Hulk" figures to be the flagship series of the United Paramount Network's all-new Sunday morning lineup this fall. Don't interpret Marvel's dealings with a new network as a sign of ill will toward Fox, home of "X-Men" and "Spider-Man." Like other studios, Marvel is simply supplying shows to more than one network. Besides, the Big M has Silver Surfer and Captain America 'toons bound for Fox.

Marvel has entrusted "The Incredible Hulk" to supervising producer Tom Tataranowicz, who helped overhaul the syndicated "Fantastic Four" and "Iron Man" to more critical approval in their second, most recent seasons (these shows are no longer in production, but could conceivably return). Tom T—as he is known in the business—and crew are mixing together the different comics versions of the Hulk, the live-action TV series and a few wrinkles of their own. You can forget that often-silly cartoon Hulk from the early 1980s.

"We're pushing the mood. We're pushing the emotion," Tataranowicz says. "This is more like drama with action than action with drama. This is the original savage Hulk. He's monosyllabic when he talks."

"He has all the range of emotion that you would expect to find in a child," adds story editor Greg Johnson. "He feels intense anger. He feels love. He feels all the painful emotions like betrayal and grief. That's one of the things that makes him an interesting character. He's more of a sympathetic victim than a human-hater."

Producer Dick Sebast, who directed 12 episodes of "Batman: The Animated Series" (including the Emmy-winning "Robin's Reckoning Part 1") and did storyboards for "Spider-Man," says he's trying to reflect the emotional aspects of the writing in the show's look.

"It's King Kong in a way," Sebast says. "He's the tragic hero, and we're trying to get a lot of that mood in the lighting, especially in all the nighttime scenes with a strong sense of lighting as opposed to the flat backgrounds you usually see."

Sounds like a "dark and gritty" Hulk, doesn't it?

"That's such an overused term," Johnson says. "To me, there's only one show that's ever really made it, 'Batman.' Maybe 'Gargoyles.'

"But that is the attempt here. A lot of it is at night. The image of the brooding Hulk in the dark is a strong one, and that's what we want to explore. So, it is somewhat dark, and it is somewhat grim."

Adds Sebast: "Dark is darker if it's put next to light. Drama is contrast, so we do have lighter moments and lighter scenes, and it won't be that relentless darkness of 'Batman.' "

Johnson describes the motivations of the characters on "The Incredible Hulk" as "desperate." And they don't come any more desperate than scientist Bruce Banner.

Like the live-action show, the series has elements of "The Fugitive," with Banner on the run from General Thunderbolt Ross and the Hulkbusters. But Banner's travels have a purpose, as he seeks other scientists in a cross-country trek for a cure to his transformation—a journey which leads him to many familiar Marvel characters. He'll also run into many situations that trigger the adrenaline rush and gamma-spawned transformation into the Hulk. In fact, Johnson says you'll see much more Hulk than Banner on the show.

"All Banner wants is a cure, and all he wants as the Hulk is to be left alone. So there are very noble reasons," notes Johnson, who wrote the episode of "Iron Man" in which the Hulk appeared. "He's provoked into attacking, he attacks, things get destroyed and he gets blamed for destroying things. He's really a victim throughout this whole thing. People will identify with that."

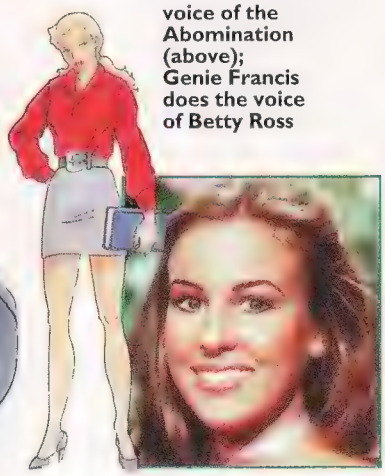
Meanwhile, Doc Samson and Betty Ross are back at Gamma Base in New Mexico, working on their own cure for Banner—a nutrient bath that was lifted from John Byrne's run in the comic book. Rick Jones will be another regular supporting cast member who tries to help Banner, and Major Talbot will be in the mix.

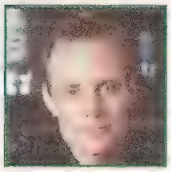
"The Return of the Beast," a two-part episode, sets up the season's story arc and tells the Hulk's origin in flashback mode. Instead of a gamma bomb that explodes to turn him into the Hulk, Banner is working on a gamma reactor, eliminating the antiquated Cold War elements of the comics' origin and staying in line with the script to the live-action Hulk film Universal is developing.

In his quest for help, Banner encounters Iron Man in Los Angeles, She-Hulk in Washington, Ghost Rider in Chicago, Thor in

Neal McDonough does the voice of Bruce Banner

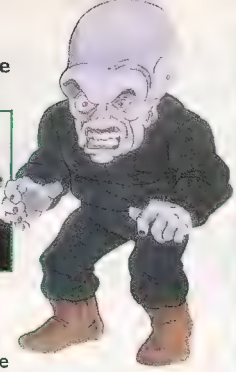
Kevin Schon is the voice of the Abomination (above); Genie Francis does the voice of Betty Ross





Matt Frewer supplies the voice of the Leader

Mark Hamill will be the voice of Gargoyle



Detroit, Sasquatch in Canada, the Thing in New York and Wendigo in the Pacific Northwest. "I think kids will think it's cool if the Hulk visits their area of the country," Tataranowicz says.

The Leader is the series' primary villain. He'll appear in the season's first two episodes, a few in the middle and in the season-ending three-parter. Gargoyle, whose origin is being reworked from the comics, will be his assistant. Other villains include the Abomination, Zzzax, and Doctor Doom.

General Ross leads the Hulkbusters in typically battle-ready fashion. SHIELD agent Gabriel Jones is also a member of the team—to Ross' chagrin. "He and Ross have a friction between them because of the imposition Ross feels because a SHIELD agent has been allowed on the team," Johnson says.

Johnson is especially excited about a relatively obscure group of characters he's bringing in from the comics called the Outcasts.

"They make their first appearance in the opening two-parter and they'll be back again," he says. "The Outcasts were, during the original gamma explosion, the animals and bugs that were also affected and have grown into their unique mutant forms. There's a huge scorpion, a bat, a rattlesnake. They have some element of intelligence but they don't talk.

"They're kind of like the Ewoks [the creatures from the last "Star Wars" film, "Return of the Jedi"], who will help the Hulk. They're very cool characters."

For the three-part season finale, Betty and Samson succeed in splitting Banner from the Hulk, and Banner marries Betty. Of course, there are complications, and Tataranowicz tells Wizard you might eventually see the gray Hulk.

Tataranowicz is also the voice director of the show and has an all-star cast, including Lou Ferrigno as the Hulk (see sidebar). Johnson's writing staff includes Len Wein (a former Hulk comic writer), Bob Forward, Glenn Leopold and Meg McLaughlin.

Luke Perry as the voice of Rick Jones

Shadoe Stevens as the voice of Doc Samson

Character designs were done in-house at Marvel. "They're not particularly cartoony, but we're getting a strong individual sense out of them, sort of a believable quality," Sebast says. "We're looking for the mood of the show, and because of the straighter aspect of the drama, we're taking a straight-forward approach."

The first two episodes of "The Incredible Hulk" will likely be shown in prime time by UPN just before the series settles into its scheduled 10 a.m. time period beginning Sept. 8.

Thirteen episodes are scheduled for the first season, and the Ghost Rider episode will serve as an introduction to a Ghost Rider series Marvel is developing for UPN.

At press time, the seventh script of "The Incredible Hulk" was being worked on, and the first episode was nearly ready to be shipped to Sae-Rom, an animation house in Korea that has done "Batman" and "Gargoyles" episodes. The exact final tint of green for the Hulk's skin had yet to be determined, but, as Sebast points out, that wasn't the toughest challenge in the coloring department.

"The Hulk wears those purple pants from the comics, and we always have to have Banner in the purple pants, too," Sebast laughs. "We're always trying to coordinate Banner's wardrobe so he doesn't look too fruity with those grape pants."

The purple pants are just one of the identifying elements that Sebast feels will appeal to fans of the Hulk.

"This will be a true adaptation of the Hulk character," Sebast says. "We're not trying to make him cuddly or cute. We're not trying to put quips and humor in him, other than what might come out of a situation.

"If you're going to do a character like the Hulk or Spider-Man that has such as strong history, to simply go off and take a different tact on something that's far off the original...you might as well create your own character."

Don't get Wizard's "Trailer Park" writer Rob Allstetter angry. You won't like him when he's angry.

IN THE GREEN ROOM

For the voice cast of "The Incredible Hulk," discovering the rich background of the comic book characters through reading their scripts turned out to be very cool.

"One of them said, 'Even Coppola doesn't bring that kind of back story to characters,' " says Hulk supervising producer Tom Tataranowicz, referring to movie director Francis Ford Coppola.

Tataranowicz is also the voice director for "The Incredible Hulk" and is striving for a style to reflect the mood of the series. "We're pushing for a naturalistic, dramatic reading," he says. "It's not stilted at all."

Neal McDonough ("Angels in the Outfield") does Bruce Banner's voice. The Hulk is played by Lou Ferrigno, who starred in the late '70s/early '80s live-action Hulk TV series.

"This wasn't a promotional gimmick," Tataranowicz says of Ferrigno. "He was the best voice for the part and is doing a great job."

Luke Perry, former heartthrob on "Beverly Hills 90210," supplies the voice of Rick Jones.

"He's got that 'cool' down that you would expect from Rick Jones," Tataranowicz says. "I used him before on 'Biker Mice from Mars.' "

Other supporting characters include Genie Francis of "General Hospital" as Betty Ross and John Vernon as General Thunderbolt Ross. Vernon did the voice of Doctor Strange in a "Spider-Man" episode that aired in May.

Matt Frewer, who was the villain Russell Tresh in February's "Generation X" live-action movie, is the voice of the Leader, a role he is reprising from an episode of "Iron Man" last season. Mark Hamill, who has worked on just about every action/adventure animated series but is best known in the field as the Joker on "Batman," is Gargoyle, the Leader's assistant.

Several of the characters appearing in the first season of "The Incredible Hulk" also appeared on either "Iron Man" or "Fantastic Four" last season. The same performers will be back, too, including Frewer as the Leader, Robert Hays as Iron Man, Dorian Harewood as War Machine, Richard Grieco as Ghost Rider, John Rhys-Davies as Thor, Chuck McCann as the Thing and Simon Templeton as Doctor Doom.

Lisa Zane, the voice of Madame Masque on "Iron Man," will be the voice of She-Hulk, Shadoe Stevens ("Dave's World") is slated for Doc Samson and, although not confirmed at press time, it looks like Peter Strauss will be doing the voice of Walter Langowski, the human side of Sasquatch. ■ *RA*

SOUND BITES

"I'D RATHER YOU RUIN SEX THAN RUIN WONDER WOMAN."
—Wizard *Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky on his favorite character*

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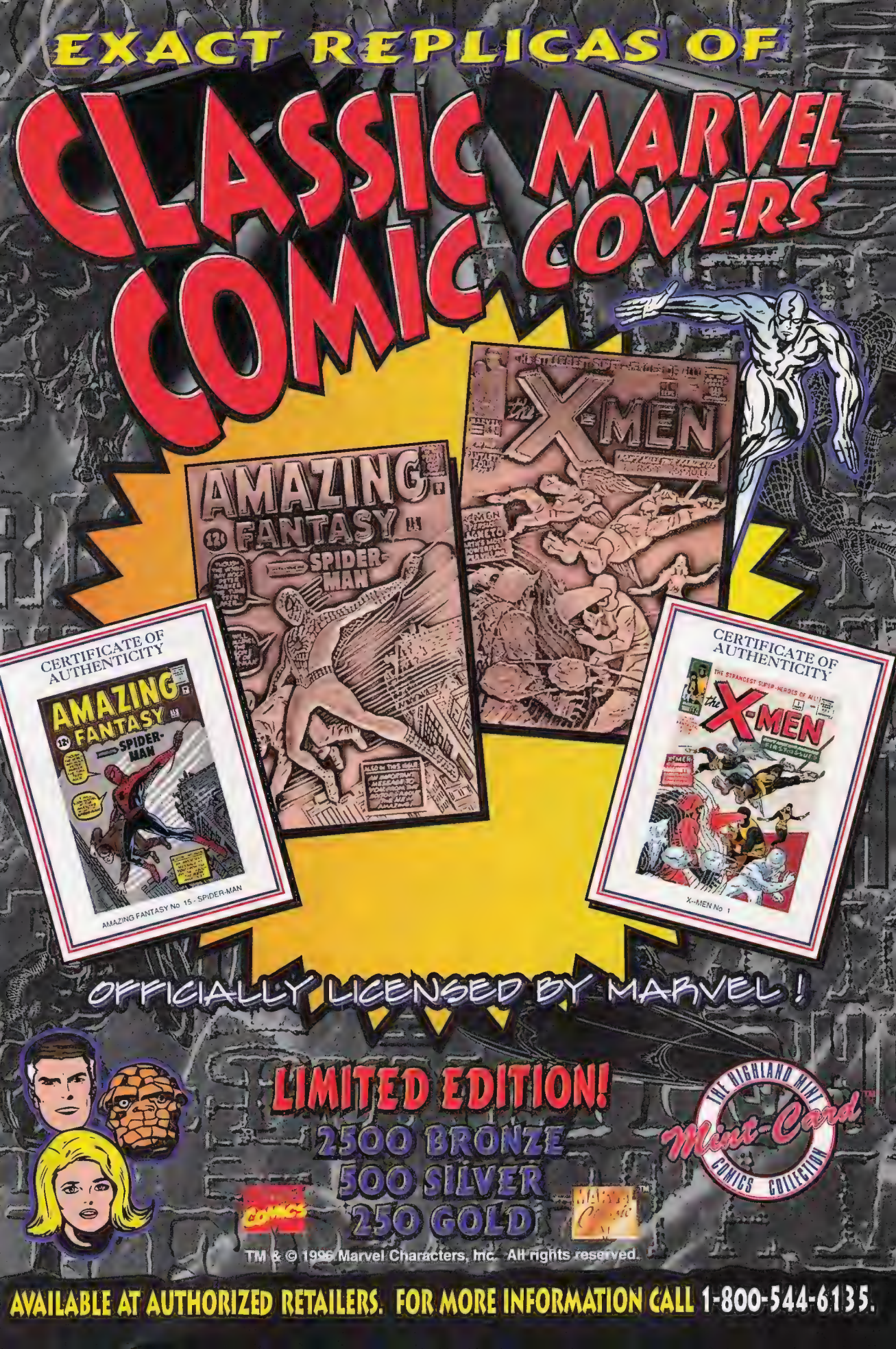

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PAYING HOMAGE

Jim Lee launches Homage Comics imprint with *Astro City*, *Strangers in Paradise* and *Leave it to Chance*

By Matthew Brady

James Robinson (above, top) and Paul Smith (above) with their creation Chance (at left)

A fantastic city full of superheroes with all-too-human flaws and foibles. A sensitive story of two women and a man, caught up in their lives and relationships with each other. A young girl adventuring in the world of the occult.

Sound like a bizarre mix? Welcome to Homage Comics, the new independent comic publishing house set to launch in July with its all-star lineup: *Astro City*, *Strangers in Paradise* and *Leave it to Chance*.

"Homage projects are the books that we won't do through WildStorm Productions [Lee's Image Comics studio]," Homage Comics founder Jim Lee says. "Homage books are creator-owned projects which are out of the mainstream, straight superhero genre."

From the outset, by publishing *Astro City*, *Strangers in Paradise* and *Leave it to Chance*, the Homage Comics line seems to appeal to the older, more discriminating comic reader. That's just the way Lee envisioned it. "There's room for a little overlap between what we do at WildStorm and the books we're putting out through Homage, but I think we'll really be appealing to younger readers, female readers and older readers," Lee says. "These books are really 'civilian-friendly' in that you can give them to someone who's never read a comic book before in their life and know that nine out of 10 people are going to enjoy it, and think it was really different from what they expected."

Homage Comics, Lee admits, has been a long time coming. "We've been wanting to launch a separate imprint for a long time," Lee reveals. "At one time, we were going to do a very cheap line of books that were black-and-white and had a more mature feel, kind of like 'R-rated' superheroes. There were also a number of licensed properties that would've fallen under this umbrella, so the desire to do something under a second imprint has always been there; it just never got off the ground until early this year."

The event that helped make Homage Comics a reality occurred late last year when *Astro City* creator/writer Kurt Busiek and the other creators that work on the series decided that, for scheduling reasons, they needed to put the book on hiatus after issue #6. "Issue #6 came out two weeks later than we wanted it to, and issue #7 would've been even two weeks later than that, so we decided not to even solicit issue #7," says Busiek.

Offers to publish the book, including one from Jim Lee, started coming in to Busiek the day the hiatus was announced. At one time, Busiek was seriously talking to Broadway Comics, DC Comics and Lee about handling the publishing and production of the title. When it was all said and done, Busiek and company decided to sign with Lee and Homage Comics.

After that, pulling in the other two books that make up the Homage Comics line turned out to be pretty simple. Busiek had a copy of James Robinson and Paul Smith's *Leave it to Chance*, and asked Lee to take a look at it. Lee loved it, and immediately called Robinson, and asked him to come aboard. The way Robinson saw it, it was an offer he and Smith just couldn't refuse. "Jim read the first issue and called us the next day and asked us to be part of the new line," says Robinson. "With his enthusiasm for our work and his promptness, we really couldn't say no."

"The whole point is to give these creators and these titles the attention and support they deserve."

—Homage Comics founder Jim Lee

As for Terry Moore's *Strangers in Paradise*, Lee had known about the book for a while, but it wasn't until he was recently in Europe doing store appearances that he picked up a few of the issues. After he got back to the states, Lee got the rest of the issues and asked Terry to join Homage. "I was really afraid he'd say no," Lee admits, "but very happy when he said yes. He told me it would be great if Homage could focus on production, distribution and promotion of the book, allowing him to get back to writing and drawing it."

For Moore, the decision was truly a godsend. "My book had gotten to the point where I couldn't do it anymore," Moore admits. "The business end was taking up so much of my time that I couldn't do what I was supposed to be doing, which is write and draw. I wasn't really looking for help; I was just sitting here, suffering with it. Jim called and told me about Homage, and it was a case of the right guy just calling at the right time."

All the creators express excitement at the possibilities that working with Homage Comics, and by association, WildStorm Productions, presents. For Moore, this means that *Strangers in Paradise* will now be published in color, and trade paperbacks will collect previous issues. The first six issues of *Astro City* will be collected into a trade paperback as well (due out in July), and Homage will be producing and printing promotional *Astro City* postcards to be given away at this summer's conventions.

But hey, isn't this Jim Lee in charge the same Jim Lee who will be starting up the *Fantastic Four* later this summer, and currently works on *WildC.A.T.s* and the occasional *Gen*^{13} issue? Isn't he kind of...busy to be starting up a new imprint? "The *FF* and *WildC.A.T.s* do take up a lot of my time right now, but I've been putting in a lot of time on these particular projects, because these are books that I read and really enjoy," says Lee. "These are books that the industry needs, and they should be published."

Many critics of Lee's new venture posit that Homage Comics appears to be what Image Comics was supposed to be from the outset: a collection of creator-owned comics coming out under one banner. Lee is quick to point out the differences between Image and Homage Comics. These differences basically lay in how much work the creator wants to do. Lee explains that books being published through the Image central office are books by creators who have developed a name for themselves in the industry, and have the energy or the acumen to control every aspect of the book from creation to production to promotion and printing. Creators like Jeff Smith (*Bone*) and Sergio Aragonés and Mark Evanier (*Groo The Wanderer*) find this arrangement to their liking.

At Homage Comics, on the other hand, Lee says that established creators end up doing a little bit more work than they would if they were working for a publisher on a work-for-hire basis (but less work than they would do at Image Central). Homage Comics is essentially a place where creators can plug their books into a full production framework, with promotions, accounting and editing departments. Whether a creator chooses the Image central office or Homage Comics, Lee says, depends on how much work the creator wants to do.

Making the division between Homage Comics and Image more distinct is Lee's recent decision not to cut an exclusive deal with a distributor for Homage, instead distributing Homage books through Capital City, Diamond and other comic distributors. In an official statement, Lee said, "Homage Comics is a different entity [than Image Comics], with a different

sensibility and a different approach to distribution."

And as for the ever-present rumors of an Image breakup that flare up every time an Image founder does something on his own, Lee just laughs. "If we were going to break up, we would've broken up a long time ago," says Lee. "Image has been together for four years now. What, do we have to be together for 40 years before people will finally say, 'Oh, I guess these guys are going to stick around.'?"

Lee points out that as a company, Image is still extremely consistent with what it was meant to be in its inception, and its critics should realize this. "The way the company was set up, it was designed to facilitate the needs of seven different creators who wanted to maintain their independence, and do what they wanted to do in comics," Lee says. "That's why people shouldn't be surprised when this type of thing happens, because Homage Comics represents my need to go out and to do something different. The great thing about Image is that the company lets me do that. It's not a problem."

Another thing that Lee stresses is that his role as Homage Comics founder doesn't mean that he has any control over the books. There won't be a "Jim Lee Presents" at the top of page one, or anything like that. "I don't have any control over the content," Lee says. "They're not my books. I'm really not worried about what's going on in these books, either. You know what people are going to deliver, based on their track record and sensibilities."

Also, Homage Comics' expansion will be very slow and careful. "We've talked, both internally at WildStorm and with folks outside about some projects, but this isn't a line where we'll have 12 monthly books right away," says Lee. "We want to see how well these books do before we think about expanding. The whole point is to give these creators and these titles the attention and support they deserve, and not get ahead of ourselves, and be all over the place."

And finally, if you're left wondering what this name "Homage" is about in the first place, Lee admits it started as a joke. "Scott Williams, Whilce Portacio and I came up with it as a name for our studio a while ago because we couldn't think of anything else," says Lee. "It refers to when an artist swipes another artist's work, and then says, 'Oh, it's my homage to so and so.' We mean it in a very ironic way, and of course it's not something we condone or do. That's where it came from, and everyone always mispronounces it!"

But why name a new publisher Homage Comics? "It's really got a high-falootin' sound to it," Lee laughs. "That should work well with these books."

[illegible] will take the girls to new [illegible] in *Strangers in Paradise*

Kurt Busiek (left) is throwing *Astro City* a curveball in the new [illegible]

Matthew Brady, who wrote an Aquaman profile elsewhere in this issue, doesn't know where he came from and everyone always mispronounces his name.

SOUND BITES

"WE'VE GONE THROUGH OUR FIRST YEAR, AND WE'VE DONE ALMOST EVERYTHING ONE CAN POSSIBLY DO TO SCREW UP A COMPANY, AND WE SURVIVED."
—*Jim Lee on Image (Wizard #27, November 1993)*

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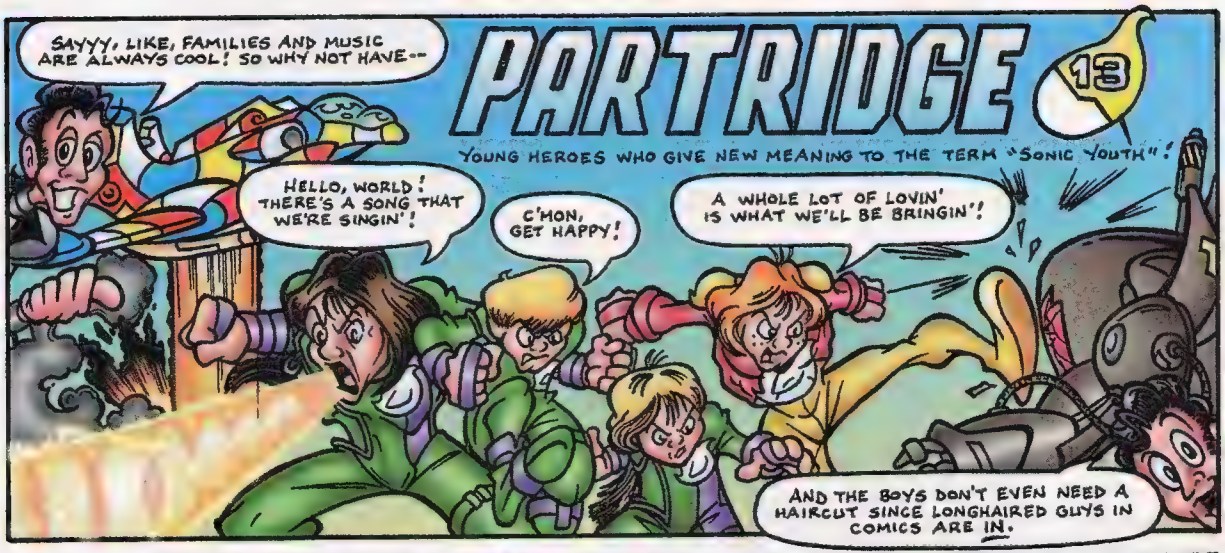
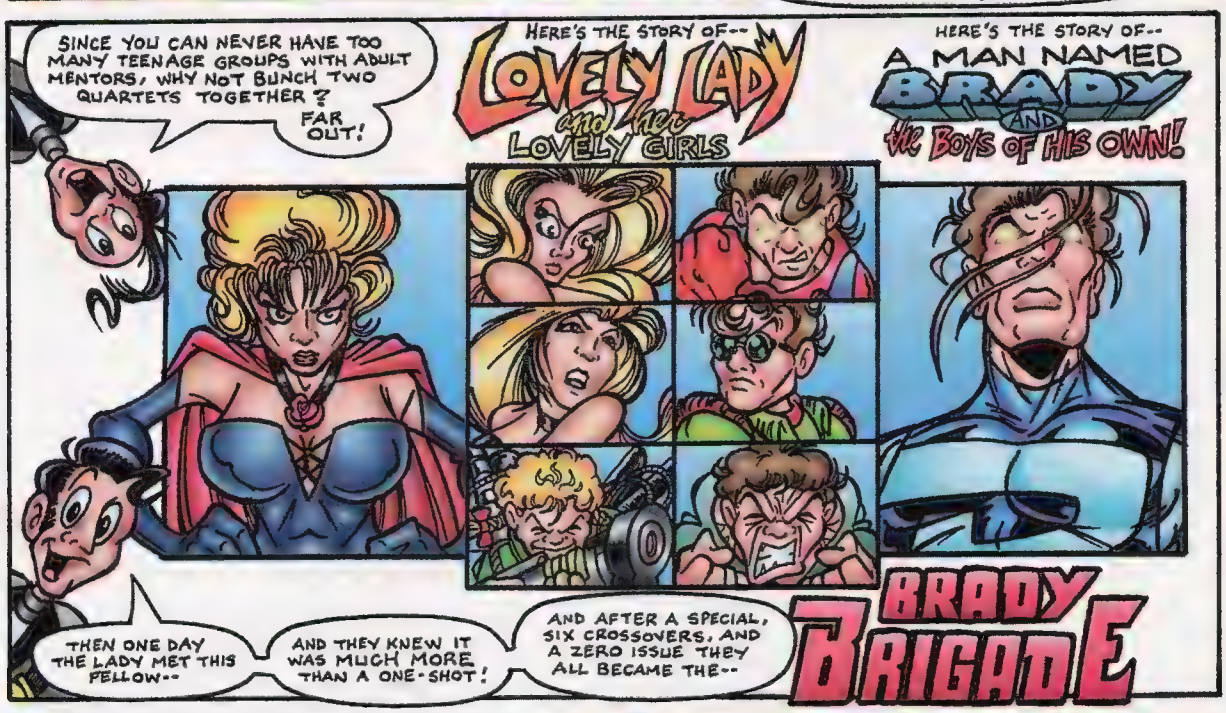
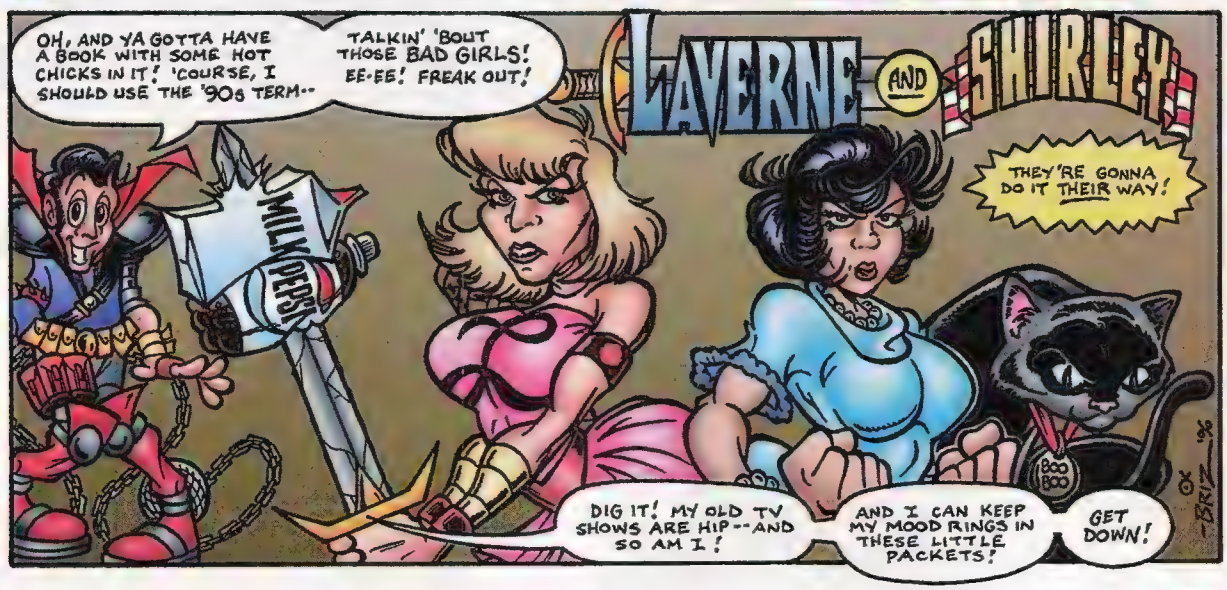
HEY, COOL CATS! B.G. SEVENO HERE, YOUR 1970'S GUY! DIDJA HEAR THAT COMICS SUPERSTAR ROB LIEFELD BOUGHT THE RIGHTS TO THAT GROOVY '70S SCI-FI TV SHOW BATTLESTAR GALACTICA? IT MAKES ME THINK, Y'KNOW? LIKE, WHAT IF MORE OF MY OLD TELEVISION FAVES WERE REVIVED AS HIP COMIC BOOKS FOR TODAY??
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF--
THE 70'S MEETS THE 90'S
LIKE, BY BRIAN DOUGLAS AHERN.
ONE OF MY FAVORITE ROMANTIC COMEDIES WOULD MAKE A GREAT TEAM BOOK! CLIMB ABOARD--
OPERATION: L.O.V.E. BOAT
LETHAL OPERATIVES OF VENGEFUL EXECUTION, UNDER THE PERFECT COVER OF A PLEASURE CRUISE SHIP AND CREW!
WITH GENUINE '90S COMIC ROMANCE!
AFTER A 27-ISSUE ENGAGEMENT, I MUST BREAK OFF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO MAINTAIN THE STATUS QUO, MY DARLING!
:GASP!: H-HOW UNEXPECTED!!
AND HOWZABOUT WE TURN UP THE FREAKY FACTOR TO GIVE A FUNKY NEW SPIN TO THAT OLD--
FANTASY ISLAND
ROURKE, KEEPER OF DARK FANTASIES, ROAMS HIS TINY ISLAND, BRINGING LIFE TO ITS VISITORS' INNERMOST DEMONS.
SMILES, EVERYONE. SMILES.
AND LIKE, THAT GROOVIN' TATTOO CAN PROVIDE THAT WAY-OUT DIALOGUE THAT THOSE "MATURE" COMICS ALL NEED!
AAH. DA SQUID, HE BREATHE UP THE JUNGLE RUSH. DA PLANE. DA PLANE!


PARTRIDGE
13
YOUNG HEROES WHO GIVE NEW MEANING TO THE TERM "SONIC YOUTH"!
SAYYY, LIKE, FAMILIES AND MUSIC ARE ALWAYS COOL! SO WHY NOT HAVE--
HELLO, WORLD! THERE'S A SONG THAT WE'RE SINGIN'!
C'MON, GET HAPPY!
A WHOLE LOT OF LOVIN' IS WHAT WE'LL BE BRINGIN'!
AND THE BOYS DON'T EVEN NEED A HAIRCUT SINCE LONGHAIRED GUYS IN COMICS ARE IN.


SINCE YOU CAN NEVER HAVE TOO MANY TEENAGE GROUPS WITH ADULT MENTORS, WHY NOT BUNCH TWO QUARTETS TOGETHER? FAR OUT!
HERE'S THE STORY OF-- LOVELY LADY and her LOVELY GIRLS
HERE'S THE STORY OF-- A MAN NAMED BRADY AND the BOYS OF HIS OWN!
THEN ONE DAY THE LADY MET THIS FELLOW--
AND THEY KNEW IT WAS MUCH MORE THAN A ONE-SHOT!
AND AFTER A SPECIAL, SIX CROSSOVERS, AND A ZERO ISSUE THEY ALL BECAME THE--
BRADY BRIGADE


OH, AND YA GOTTA HAVE A BOOK WITH SOME HOT CHICKS IN IT! 'COURSE, I SHOULD USE THE '90s TERM--
TALKIN' 'BOUT THOSE BAD GIRLS! EE-EE! FREAK OUT!
LAVERNE AND SHIRLEY
MILK PEPSI
THEY'RE GONNA DO IT THEIR WAY!
BOO BOO
DIG IT! MY OLD TV SHOWS ARE HIP--AND SO AM I!
AND I CAN KEEP MY MOOD RINGS IN THESE LITTLE PACKETS!
GET DOWN!

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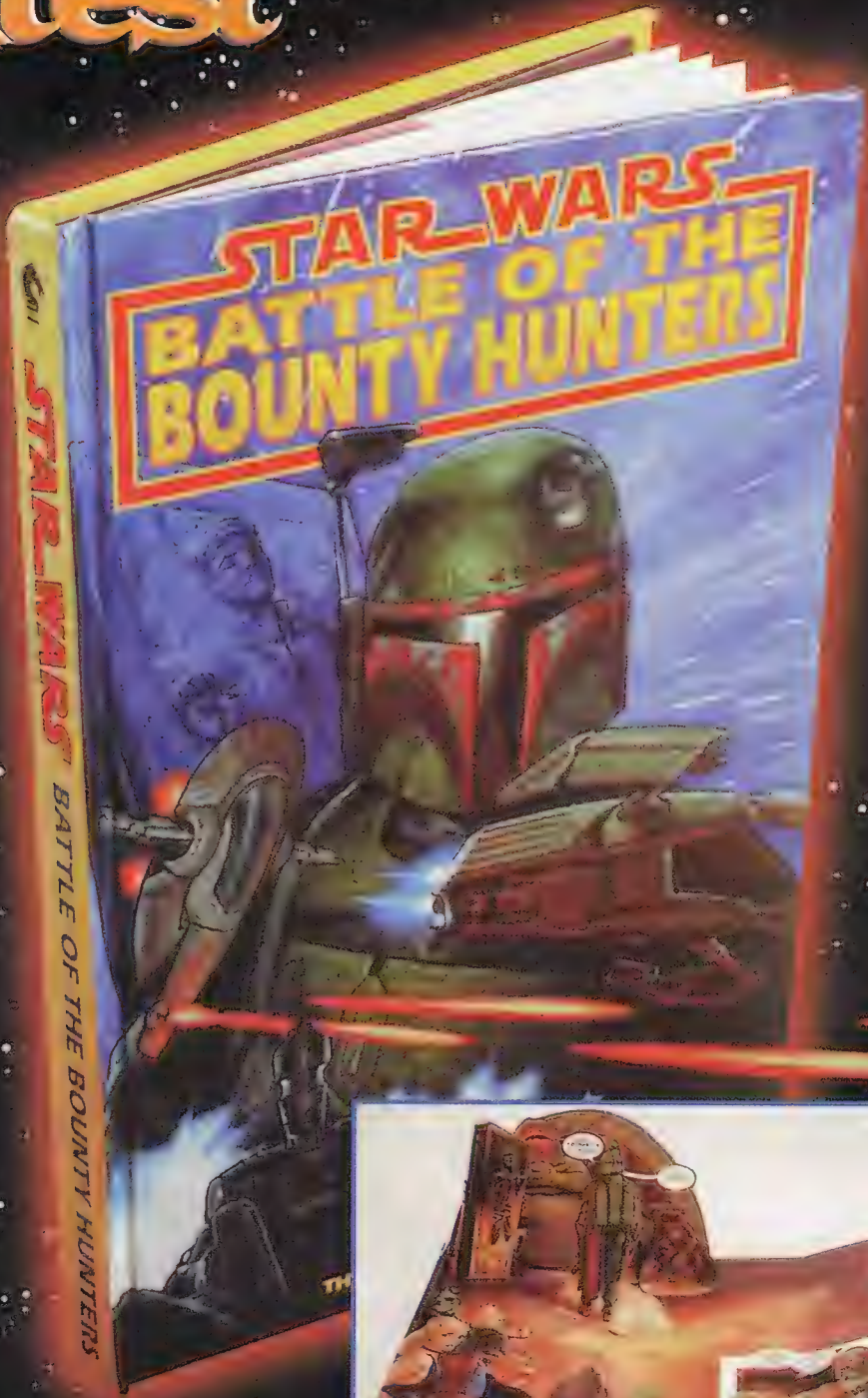
The Star Wars Pop-Up Comic Contest



How To Play

Hey, all you Jedi Knights-in-training! Here's your chance to win a first-of-its-kind pop-up comic book, *Star Wars: Battle of the Bounty Hunters*, starring the ever-fun, ever-armored, ever-mysterious, we-all-cried-when-he-was-ingested-by-the-Sarlacc Boba Fett. Written by Ryder Windham with painted artwork by Christopher Moeller, this pop-up part of the "Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire" storyline is sure to be the grooviest "Star Wars" item since the light saber! And just because we're soooo nice, we'll give you a chance to check it out for free, and maybe even win some other cool prizes!

Just channel the Force, become one with the universe, and fill out the coupon below and mail it in. You could be a lucky winner of one of our...

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Grand Prize (3): Three lucky winners will each get a copy of *Star Wars: Battle of the Bounty Hunters* (an $18 value) and an uncut press proof sheet from the pop-up comic!

First Prize (22): Twenty-two lucky winners will each get a copy of the *Star Wars: Battle of the Bounty Hunters* pop-up comic.

This contest is sponsored by Dark Horse Comics, and we think they're so swell!

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No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Dark Horse Comics and their immediate families or Impossible Man (he's from the planet Poppup, y'know). Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Star Wars Pop-Up Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Maybe Dark Horse'll publish a Barb Wire meets Ghost pop-up book. Oh, baby. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by August 30, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on September 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after September 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Star Wars Pop-Up Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

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Star Wars Pop-Up Entry Form

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SHELF LIFE

100 Comics Every Modern Day Collector Should Own

There's good comics, and then there's Oh-man-this-was-the-coolest-thing-I-ever-read-in-my-whole-fanboy-life comics. So what we've done here at *Wizard* Central is pick 100 of the coolest, most ass-kickin', superbly written, beautifully drawn, "if you don't own these, you're a dork" comic books from the Modern Age (that's like from the '80s and up). If you're a true comic fan, you'll wanna get a hold of these books, even if it means selling your Sony PlayStation to get 'em! And if you're having trouble finding these issues at your local shop, the majority of 'em are available in trade paperback.
Now go buy 'em.

The Amazing Spider-Man #229-#230 (above right)

These two issues define what Spider-Man's all about. In a nutshell: The unstoppable Juggernaut wants to capture the precognitive (and immobile) Madame Web. With the F.F., Avengers and X-Men out of town, it's up to Spidey to find a way to beat the unbeatable foe. So, how's he do it? Simple: He can't. After Spidey's futile attempts to stop him, an innocent pays the price for the Juggernaut's rampage. Blaming himself for the tragedy, a battered and broken Spider-Man sets off on a suicide run to bring Juggy to justice. In a shocking finale, we learn just how much Spidey truly believes that with great power comes great responsibility.

Animal Man #15

Writer Grant Morrison's entire 26-issue run on this series is truly outstanding, but this issue really stands out. In it, Animal Man joins forces with Dolphin to put an end to some cruel fishermen who find pleasure in slaughtering helpless dolphins. Morrison successfully manages to put you inside the head of one of the dolphins and her mate, adding true impact to this tale. Learn the ways of the dolphin and how they're truly different from us in an extremely touching story. When you're done reading this one, you'll find yourself ashamed for being human.

By the WIZARD staff

SOUND BITES

"FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP, YOU MUST BE ABLE TO PROVE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN BAD-MOUTHED, PUNCHED, SUED, HARASSED, THREATENED OR LIED TO BY MR. ELLISON."
—*Victims of [Harlan] Ellison membership flyer (Wizard #32, April 1994)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Astro City #1-#6 (opposite bottom)

Welcome to Astro City, where the charm of these issues is that superheroes are the norm and their stories are mostly told by the city's denizens—normal, everyday folk. One tale is of a Superman-type hero who refuses to have a "normal" life as long as there's trouble somewhere; a follow-up sees him on a date with a heroine. Another asks: What does a two-bit hood do when he discovers a superhero's secret identity? Others explore how superheroes affect the daily lives of Astro City residents, including when the arrogant Crackerjack saves Mr. Bridwell from a burning building, and when Marta—a junior clerk in accounting—finds herself in the middle of a battle between the Unholy Alliance and the First Family.

Batman #404-#407

Reprinted: ***Batman: Year One*** **TPB**

Hot off of *Daredevil*'s "Born Again" storyline, Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli reunite to tell Batman's origin in an awesome story entitled "Batman: Year One." Ever see Batman totally screw up? Or get his butt majorly whupped? You will, right here. But Batman almost takes a back seat, as the bulk of the story's told from Commissioner Gordon's (he's only a lieutenant at the time) point of view. And as Bruce Wayne finds his way to becoming a masked vigilante, good cop Gordon learns police politics the hard way as the corrupt police commissioner wants him out of Gotham.

Batman: The Dark Knight Returns #1-#4 (below)

Reprinted: ***Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*** **TPB**

Arguably the greatest Batman story ever told, this futuristic Bat-tale begins some 10 years after the Dark Knight has retired. But when things get reaaaal bad in Gotham, Bruce Wayne dons the mantle once again and sets off to clean up the city. But this Batman's older, angrier and more violent. He's also far from his prime and not exempt from mistakes. Witness his ultimate battle with the Joker, and a fight to the death (!) with his rival Superman! Writer/artist Frank Miller captures the true essence of Batman on every page and drops clues as to what happened to the rest of the heroes in the DC Universe.

Batman: The Killing Joke

The ultimate Joker story? Could be. One of the crown jewels in Alan Moore's writing crown (along with what's become rare interior art by the colossally talented Brian Bolland), *The Killing Joke* gives you a brilliant dual story as you follow the present-day Joker on a brutal and disturbing campaign of horror in an attempt to drive Commissioner Gordon insane. Woven throughout the main story are a series of flashbacks chronicling a failed comedian's descent into grief and despair, leading to the creation of one of the most spectacular comic book villains of all time.

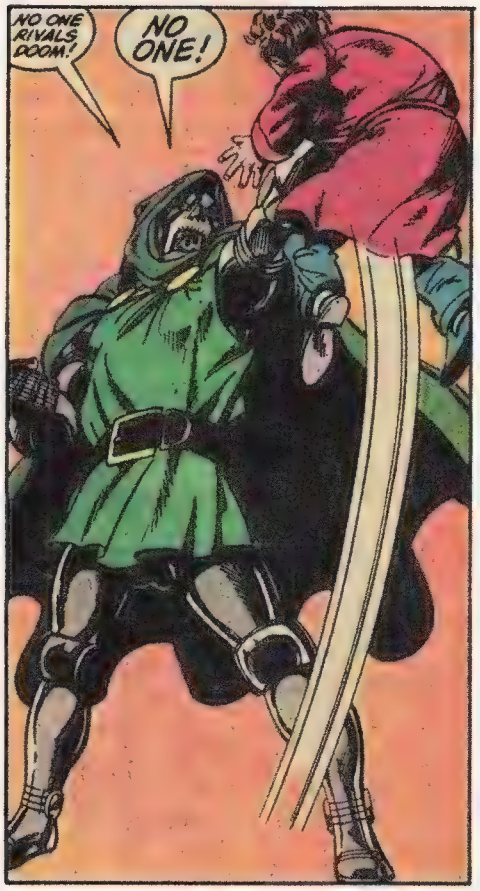
Captain America #253-#254

This two-parter highlights John Byrne's *Cap* run, as it shows what Captain America's really all about: a true hero with the utmost regard for *all* life. But that's really put to the test when Cap gets a call from the original Union Jack asking for his help in stopping the resurrected vampire Baron Blood. When Cap arrives, it's shield-slinger versus bloodsucker in a vicious battle. And while Cap must make a heart-wrenching decision, a shocker of an ending sees the death of a hero and the birth of another.

Daredevil #181 (above)

Reprinted: ***The Elektra Saga*** **TPB**

The cover pretty much says it all: "Bullseye vs. Elektra—one wins, one dies!" Sounds kinda hokey by today's standards, but this brutal story was done at a time when the death of a major character wasn't commonplace.



In this case, one is Daredevil's most hated enemy, while the other is his former-lover-turned-assassin who he's sworn to bring to justice. What follows is a brutal, wince-inducing brawl that ends with a decisive winner and Daredevil standing face-to-face with the murderer. What happens next would haunt Daredevil for years to come.

Daredevil #227–#233

Reprinted: ***Daredevil: Born Again*** **TPB**

When former DD confidante Karen Page (now a porn star) sells Daredevil's secret identity (Matt Murdock) for drug money, it sets off a chain of events that rocks Murdock's world in an epic saga entitled "Born Again." Turns out that the Kingpin gets wind of this info and strips Murdock of his job, his friends, his sanity and almost his life. But can even the might of the Kingpin keep a good man down? Murdock sums it up best before seeking revenge on the Kingpin: "I have shown him…that a man without hope is a man without fear."

Fantastic Four #242–#244

Reprinted: ***The Trial of Galactus*** **TPB**

Easily the coolest storyline in John Byrne's unforgettable run on the *Fantastic Four*, this ish presents Galactus' final attempt to consume Earth's energies. Can the combined might of the F.F. and the Avengers (along with benchwarmers Daredevil and Spider-Man) halt the nigh-omnipotent Galactus? Nope. While this slugfest goes down in history as one of comics' coolest, Earth is doomed…until the reinforcements arrive (that's when we see Galactus do something we've never seen before). All this, plus Mr. Fantastic provides one of the greatest comic book quotes ever, and that's only at the end of Part Two!

Fantastic Four #258 (left)

Arguably the best comic book villain of all time, Dr. Doom was never at his finest unless penned by writer/artist John Byrne. While Byrne gave us a handful of great Doom stories, none came close to this issue's up-close and personal look inside the egomaniacal villain—his thoughts, his motivations and, ultimately, the rage that fuels his madness. With nary a single cameo by a costumed do-gooder, you'll tour the halls of Castle Doom, observe the price paid by those that fail their master, and witness chilling brutality when his young ward Kristoff suggests that Doom may have…an equal.

The Incredible Hulk #340

Reprinted: ***The Incredible Hulk: Ground Zero*** **TPB**

Wolverine. That'd be enough to grab almost any comic fan's attention, but this issue has so much more to offer. Back before Peter David and Todd McFarlane started calling each other names, they produced some of the most exciting Hulk stories to date. One of the highlights of their run was this ish, which saw the most kick-ass, visceral Hulk/Wolverine fight EVER! Here we see the limits of the Hulk's "invulnerability," how far Wolverine can be pushed until he snaps, and finally…which hero is left standing. Nope, it's not who you think.

The Infinity Gauntlet #1–#6 (right)

Reprinted: ***The Infinity Gauntlet*** **TPB**

The X-Men's last stand. The death of Spider-Man. Galactus defeated. In the most spectacular cosmic storyline to ever grace a comic page, the mad god Thanos has constructed a weapon of unlimited power, the Infinity Gauntlet. In an attempt to please the lady Death, Thanos sets out to murder half the universe. And succeeds. What follows is a no-holds-barred battle royale, as the surviving heroes of Earth rally to avenge their fallen comrades and put an end to the mad god's plans in a spectacular, yet futile display. One by one, Earth's champions meet their doom, insuring the damnation of the universe…until something happens.

Iron Man #149–#150

Reprinted: ***Iron Man vs. Doctor Doom*** **TPB**

He's the ultimate Iron Man villain. No, not the Mandarin. Titanium Man? Nah. The Unicorn? Please. We're talking Dr. Doom, the coolest sparring partner we've seen for ol' Shellhead yet. This killer two-parter sees the two of 'em lock horns, get tossed through Doom's time platform and land back in medieval times, smack-dab in the middle of Camelot. Aligning himself with Arthur, Iron Man faces overwhelming odds at the hands of Doom and an army of the undead,

resurrected by Arthur's sorceress sister Morgana Le Fey. Hopelessly outmatched, IM's gotta battle sorcery with science, conserve his dwindling energy supply and do the unthinkable to get back home.

Marvels #1–#4 (above)

Reprinted: ***Marvels*** **TPB**

This gorgeous look at the beginnings of the Marvel Universe is seen through the eyes of *Daily*

SOUND BITES

"ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T REALIZE IT AT THE TIME, DRAWING X-MEN WAS SOME OF THE BEST FUN I'VE HAD IN THE BUSINESS."

—*Dave Cockrum (Wizard #33, May 1994)*

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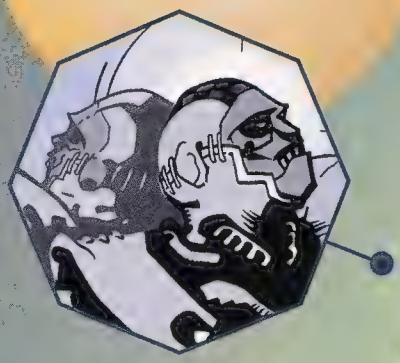
THE 21st CENTURY IS HERE

An ordinary woman transformed into a virtual reality nightmare...

Genetically-enhanced killers who hunt in two linked bodies at once...

A religious conspiracy that could shatter the universe...



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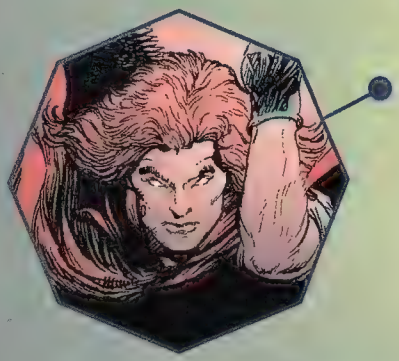

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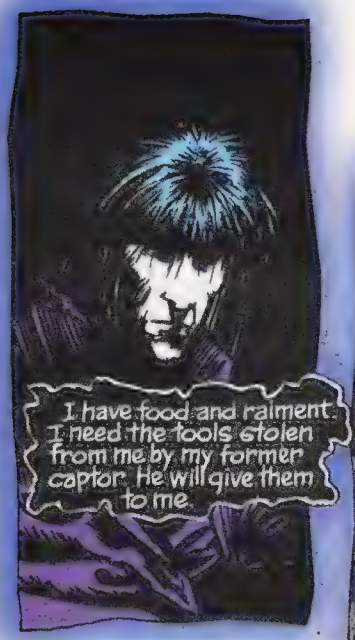

Bugle photographer Phil Sheldon, as the dawning of the superhero unfolds right before a normal person's eyes. Writer Kurt Busiek and painter Alex Ross bring out the best of Marvel's superheroes and beautifully show you what made these early stories so great. See how super-powered soldiers affected the outcome of WWII, how society first dealt with mutant hysteria and how the coming of Galactus and the Silver Surfer heralded the end of the world. Plus, learn if Spider-Man was truly responsible for the murder of his former girlfriend Gwen Stacy.

Saga of the Swamp Thing #21

Reprinted: *Saga of the Swamp Thing* TPB

This issue, entitled "The Anatomy Lesson," was the catalyst for an incredible run of Alan Moore *Swamp Thing* issues, in which Swampy evolved from a boring, pathetic, hollow swamp monster into an intelligent, intriguing, godlike creature. It begins here when Jason Woodrue (the Floronic Man) is hired by an old man to perform an autopsy on the recently killed Swamp Thing and discover its secrets. But when Woodrue learns the truth about the swamp creature, the old man refuses to listen, and in doing so may be signing his own death warrant. Moore does a brilliant job of updating Swamp Thing's origin, without negating any of the past.

The Sandman #1–#7 (at top)

Reprinted: *The Sandman: Preludes & Nocturnes* TPB

Writer Neil Gaiman combines mythology, horror and a bit of the dreamstuff to show that comics are a legitimate form of literature. This first story arc tells of Morpheus (the Sandman, Lord of Dreams, etc.) as he's summoned and imprisoned by an old magus for nearly 70 years. Learn of Morpheus' escape and subsequent search for his helm, dreamstone and pouch of sand (containing much of his power), which brings him on a journey from the dreamworld to Earth to the most horrifying diner in America, all the way to the very depths of Hell itself!

Superman #21–#22, Adventures of Superman #444

When writer/artist John Byrne ended his epic run on the Superman titles, he sure went out with a bang, as Superman crosses the ultimate line! The Man of Steel is beaconed to an alternate dimension, where three surviving evil Kryptonians find Earth and systematically murder the entire population! The last line of defense? Only Superman—with the assistance of the alternate dimension's Supergirl, Bruce Wayne and Lex Luthor—is left to stop the trio from crossing dimensions to the DC Universe Earth for similar results. And, as each of the heroes falls, Superman must resort to a solution that will affect him for the rest of his life.

Superman Annual #11 (above right)

The incredible *Watchmen* team of Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons join forces to bring you a glimpse at Superman's birthday party. When Wonder Woman, Batman and Robin show up at the Fortress of Solitude, it seems the Man of Steel's started the party without 'em. Apparently, Superman unknowingly opened a gift from Mongul containing the Black Mercy, a plant/fungus that attaches itself to its victims in a form of symbiosis. The catch? It grants its victims their hearts' desires. So while Supes is "happily" imprisoned in his own mind, the rest o' the gang must take down Mongul, but they're waaaaay out of their league.

Tales of the Teen Titans #42–#44, Annual #3

Reprinted: *The New Teen Titans: The Judas Contract* TPB

This four-parter, called "The Judas Contract," is one of the best superhero stories of the 1980s! It turns out that one of the Titans' own members has been a spy for Deathstroke the Terminator for well over a year's worth of continuity. At the story's start, this rogue member covertly assists Deathstroke in fulfilling his H.I.V.E. contract: capture the Titans for their subsequent deaths. One by one, each Titan is taken out...with one exception: Dick Grayson. But can he get enough help to rescue his teammates? Heroes and villains are born, heroes and villains die and the Titans would never be the same again.

Thor #337–#355

As significant as Frank Miller was to Daredevil, Walt Simonson's Thor captured the essence of the character, creating an as-yet unmatched run on the series. Kicking off by bestowing the power of Thor to the alien Beta Ray Bill, Simonson gives us the awakening of the dark god Surtur, the forging of the dark sword Doom, and the foretold Norse apocalypse: Ragnarok. The most ruthless of villains ally themselves with the gods as the final battle for Creation builds to its shocking finale. Hopelessly outmatched, Earth's heroes are powerless to stop Surtur on his mad quest of destruction, leading him to the Rainbow Bridge of Asgard, where Thor makes his final stand to stop the demon lord...and fails.

SOUND BITES

"JACK WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST STORYTELLERS AND GREATEST CREATIVE MINDS OF THIS CENTURY. HE PROVED THAT THE LIMITS OF IMAGINATION ARE IMAGINARY."
—*Jim Shooter on the passing of Jack Kirby (Wizard #33, May 1994)*

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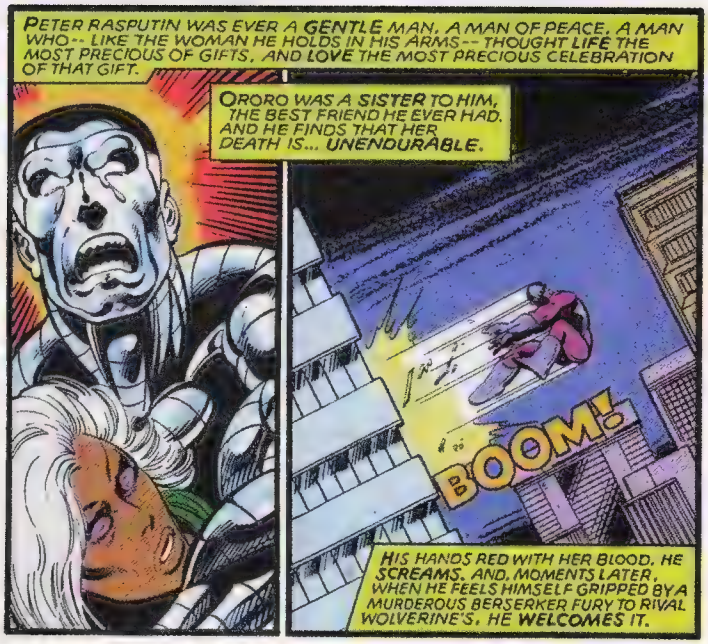


The Uncanny X-Men #126-#128

Reprinted: ***Classic X-Men #31-#33***

No other storyline better sums up what the X-Men are about. In an attempt to halt the murderous rampage of the reality-warping Mutant X (a.k.a. Proteus), the X-Men head to England to confront the villain. But even with the cosmic power of the Phoenix on their side, the team is disturbingly laid to waste by the nigh-omnipotent Proteus. What follows is a look into the fears and phobias that make each X-Man "human" and unique, and how the relationships between the members make them more than a team. Culminating in Proteus' dark secret and an X-Man setting aside his beliefs in a last-ditch effort to stop the villain, this is THE X-Men story.

The Uncanny X-Men #135-#137

Reprinted: ***Classic X-Men #41-#43*** **and** ***Uncanny X-Men: The Dark Phoenix Saga*** **TPB**

Though the seeds of "The Dark Phoenix Saga" are planted between issues #129 and #134, this is where the controversial story hits full throttle. Not only does a major X-Man die, but another quits because of it! Due to recent mind-tampering, Phoenix (a.k.a. Jean Grey) transforms into the twisted Dark Phoenix and destroys an entire alien race. But can even the X-Men, with some help, stop her fury? Meanwhile, a galactic tribunal is formed to try Phoenix for her crimes against the universe, with the sentence being death! Even the X-Men can't predict the curveball thrown at the story's climax.

The Uncanny X-Men #141-#142 (left)

Reprinted: ***Uncanny X-Men: Days of Futures Past***

Before killing heroes was a common thing, this X-Men two-parter stunned the world with its shocking depiction of an apocalyptic future where almost every mutant you loved was dead! It all started when Senator Kelly was assassinated by the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, sparking the introduction of the Sentinel program, which caused all-out war in the U.S., killing or imprisoning almost all mutants. But a few X-Men survived, and in an attempt to prevent their reality from happening, they send Kate Pryde back in time to keep Kelly's assassination from ever taking place. Thing is, she might be too late.

Watchmen #1-#12 (below)

Reprinted: ***Watchmen*** **TPB**

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons changed the very course of the comics industry with this masterful tale, setting some pretty high standards. *Watchmen* centers on a paranoid world (where Nixon's still president) that doesn't trust superheroes. But a group of heroes returns to the spotlight when a former teammate is murdered. As their investigation gets closer to the truth, more and more people are killed. In the end, see how far one hero is willing to go in order to grant complete world peace. This highly intelligent work, which will really make you think, is one of the best, if not THE BEST, comic book series ever. Period. W

While doing research for this article, the Wizard *staff was reminded just how great the comic book artform was. We're honored to be a part of it.*

"IT'S GOING TO HAVE A NAKED LADY ON THE COVER [OF THE FIRST ISSUE]; IF THAT DOESN'T SELL, NOTHING WILL."
—*John Byrne on* Babe *(Wizard #35, July 1994)*
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Comics' Best-Kept Secrets

If you're looking for some other great comics just slightly off the beaten path, here's a list of 10 titles you should give a try:

The Books of Magic (mini-series) #1-#4 (below)

14-year-old Tim Hunter is told he has the potential to be the world's greatest sorcerer. Unfortunately, one of his tour guides—the Phantom Stranger, John Constantine, Dr. Occult and Mr. E—wants Tim dead!

Elementals (1st series) #1-#5

Just as the Elementals start coping with their newfound powers and the fact that they've come back from the dead, they're kidnapped by Saker and imprisoned on Nacht Island. There, they hone their powers and learn of Saker's plan to release the Shadow Spear—a deadly, supernatural assault on all of humanity.

The Golden Age #1-#4 (right)

This Elseworlds tale has the Justice Society of America come out of retirement to face the greatest menace the world has ever seen. And you won't believe who it is! Some will live and *many* will die.

Hawkworld (mini-series) #1-#3

This gorgeously illustrated, dark and graphic origin tale of Hawkman reveals a huge conspiracy throughout the high-societal land of Thanagar that Katar Hol plans on blowing wide open. It's an emotional roller coaster as Hol must decide where his loyalties lie.

Jon Sable, Freelance #1-#6

This straightforward action/adventure series (with a dash of humor) stars a freelance mercenary who leads a double life as a popular children's book author. Learn the sad tale of what turned an honest, hard-working family man into one of the world's best guns-for-hire.

Magnus, Robot Fighter (Valiant) #1-#4

Magnus begins to realize that the freewill robots he's been destroying aren't malfunctioning at all, but are in fact actual thinking beings. Can he cope with the fact that he's *murdering* the robots that have declared all-out war on him and his society?

Miracleman #1-#16

While Miracleman tries adjusting to normal life with godlike powers, he must confront his former young partner, Johnny Bates, who's been corrupted by his own godlike powers. As they duke it out through the streets of London in one of the most violent battles of all time, Miracleman must make a tragic decision.

Solar (Valiant) #1-#4

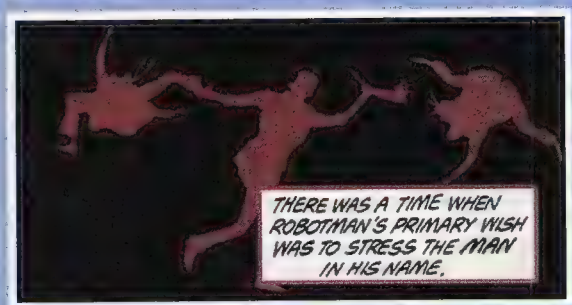
What happens when a man who read comics as a kid suddenly gets the power of a god? He fights crime, sees his therapist, and damages Antarctica—the usual stuff. Does it pay to go on with your everyday life when your subconsciousness manifests itself as a superhero in the physical world?

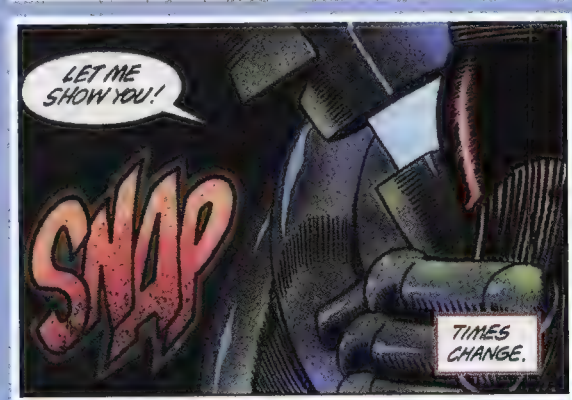
Squadron Supreme #1-#12

In the face of worldwide chaos, the Squadron Supreme takes complete control of the U.S. in order to save it from anarchy! Total control carries its toll, however, as the Squadron is plagued by death, betrayal and attacks from enemies as well as friends who've sworn to stop them.

Thanos Quest #1-#2

In a story that leads up to *The Infinity Gauntlet*, the wickedly clever Thanos sets out to steal the six Infinity Gems from their holders. With them, he should have enough power to finally fulfill his destiny: wiping out half the population of the universe.





BUSINESS

Wizard takes an exclusive peek at Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld's preliminary sketches for their plans on restarting the Marvel Universe

"Rob and I both put in a bid for Captain America," says Jim Lee of his and Rob Liefeld's "Heroes Reborn" deal, marking their return to Marvel this September to help relaunch four of the company's core books. "But Rob really, really wanted Cap, so I said I'd take Fantastic Four. And since the Avengers seem to naturally go with Cap, I decided to take Iron Man." Lee's also reintroducing the savage Hulk, who will be co-starring in Iron Man, while Liefeld gains control of Thor.

Adds Liefeld, "I love the FF, but I wouldn't touch that book with a 10-foot pole. I figure I could never do anything as good as what Stan Lee and Jack Kirby did, and then what John Byrne did later. That stuff was so influential to me."

The sketches filling these pages show some of Lee and Liefeld's preliminary ideas. In fact, some of these were done literally as negotiations proceeded. "Rob and I did some sketching in the meetings while we were talking," Lee reveals. "The Marvel guys would leave to confer, and we'd be sitting there talking and sketching as we talked, playing around with some basic designs." Indeed, some of Lee's pages arrived at *Wizard* with meeting notes scribbled around the edges. (Unfortunately, all the juicy stuff was blacked out.)

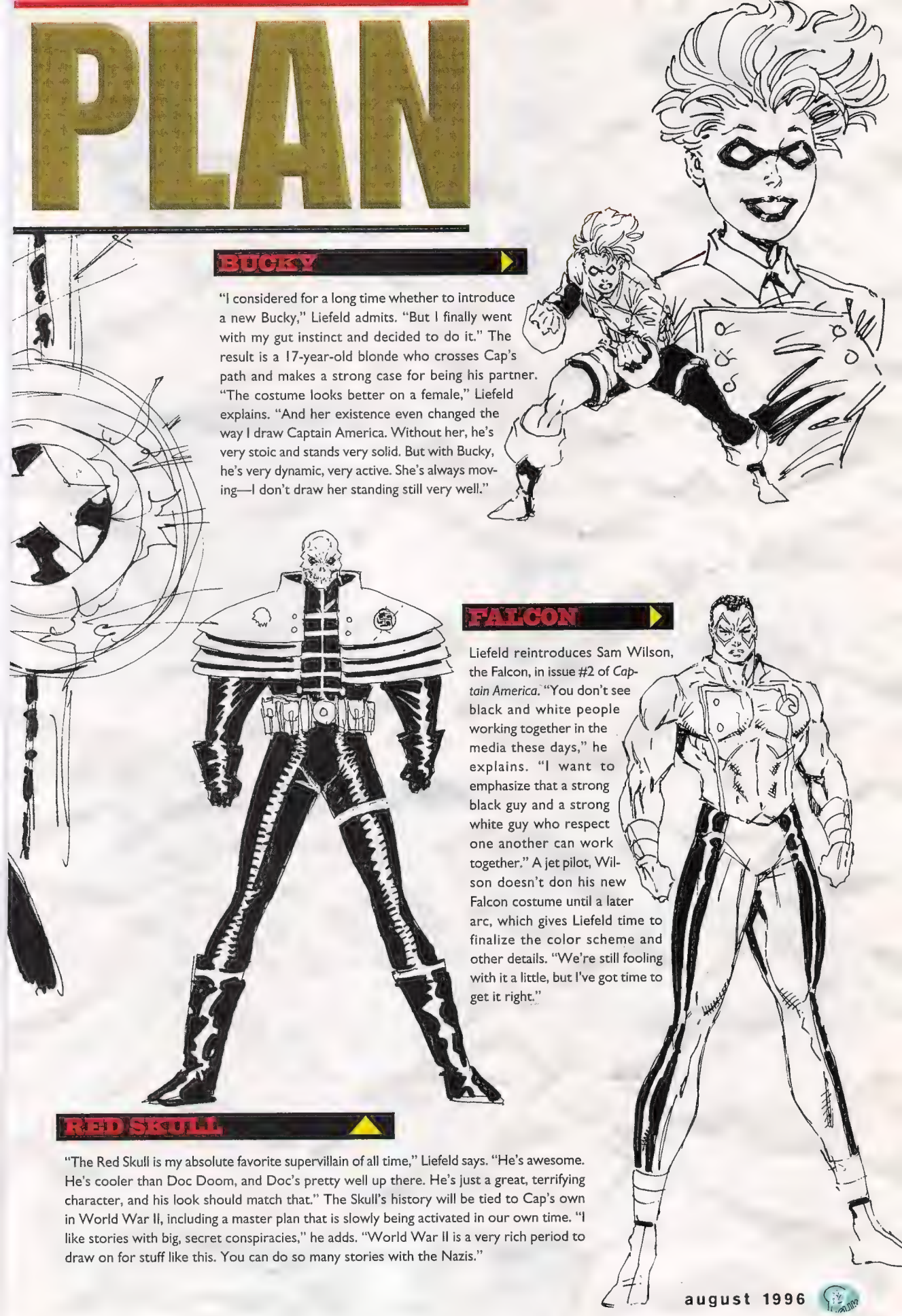
Both creators want to reinject the original 1960s ambience into their books, but with a 1990s sensibility. "My stories won't be tied to the past," Lee stresses. "But the feel and tone of the stories and characters definitely will be tied to their heritage." Liefeld agrees: "I want the Avengers to have a real contemporary feel, but with the sense of grandeur from the classic Marvel stories that I feel has been missing for a while."

By Craig Shutt

CAPTAIN AMERICA

Liefeld says that Marvel encouraged him to change the Star-Spangled Avenger's looks as much as he wanted to—but it's pretty hard to improve on Cap. "The costume is awesome," Liefeld argues. "It's one of the best-designed costumes in history. But that 'A' on his forehead has bothered me since I was a kid." Cap wears the stars and stripes on his chest, he points out, and that says it all. "Superman's 'S' works, but Batman doesn't have a big 'B' on his chest," he adds. "I tried leaving his forehead blank, but it doesn't look right." Response to the hero's new eagle design has been running 50-50, he admits, but he won't back down. "There's not a chance you'll see [the 'A'] back," he says. "Get over it. I say that with compassion, because I understand why people are upset. But I thought this through, and I'm not changing my mind."

PLAN



BUCKY

"I considered for a long time whether to introduce a new Bucky," Liefeld admits. "But I finally went with my gut instinct and decided to do it." The result is a 17-year-old blonde who crosses Cap's path and makes a strong case for being his partner. "The costume looks better on a female," Liefeld explains. "And her existence even changed the way I draw Captain America. Without her, he's very stoic and stands very solid. But with Bucky, he's very dynamic, very active. She's always moving—I don't draw her standing still very well."

FALCON

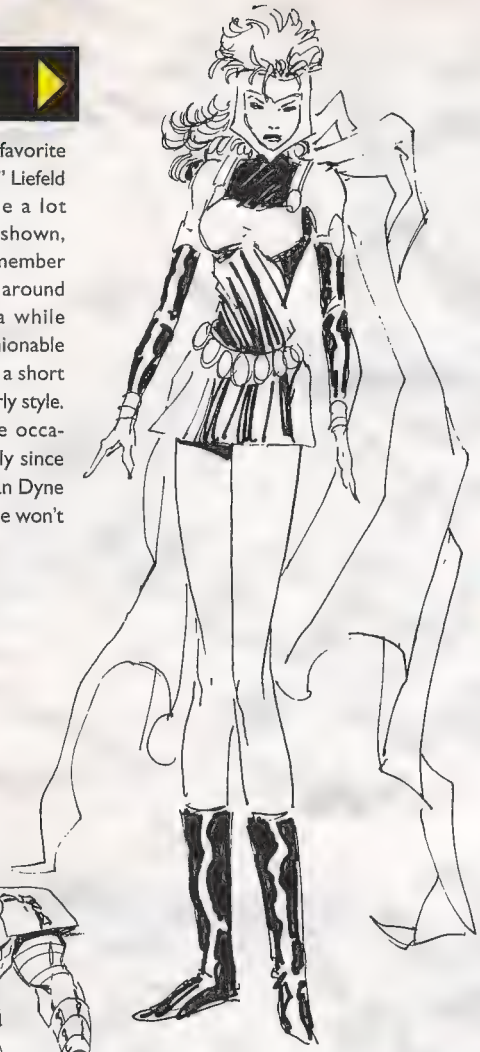
Liefeld reintroduces Sam Wilson, the Falcon, in issue #2 of *Captain America*. "You don't see black and white people working together in the media these days," he explains. "I want to emphasize that a strong black guy and a strong white guy who respect one another can work together." A jet pilot, Wilson doesn't don his new Falcon costume until a later arc, which gives Liefeld time to finalize the color scheme and other details. "We're still fooling with it a little, but I've got time to get it right."

RED SKULL

"The Red Skull is my absolute favorite supervillain of all time," Liefeld says. "He's awesome. He's cooler than Doc Doom, and Doc's pretty well up there. He's just a great, terrifying character, and his look should match that." The Skull's history will be tied to Cap's own in World War II, including a master plan that is slowly being activated in our own time. "I like stories with big, secret conspiracies," he adds. "World War II is a very rich period to draw on for stuff like this. You can do so many stories with the Nazis."

SCARLET WITCH

"The Scarlet Witch is my favorite character in the Avengers," Liefeld says. "She's going to be a lot younger than currently shown, and the most powerful member of the team." He played around with her costume for a while before deciding on a fashionable retro look which includes a short skirt reminiscent of her early style. Her costume will change occasionally, he adds, especially since fashion-conscious Janet Van Dyne will be around (although she won't be the Wasp).



SWORDSMAN

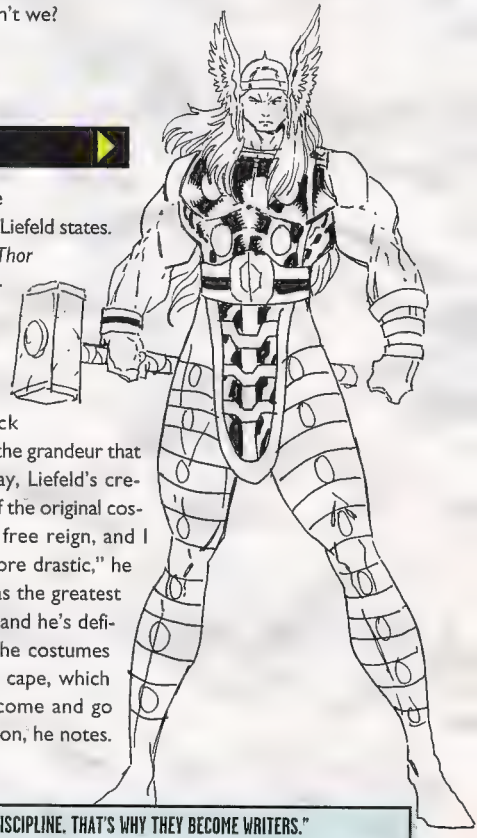
"I've always liked the name for the Swordsman, but I hated the character," Liefeld says. In fact, back when he was doing *X-Force*, Liefeld pestered then-X-Men editor Bob Harras to let him create such a character for the regular *Avengers* title, in the hopes of taking over the book later on. Now that he's on the book, he's created a new version of the one existing Swordsman. "He's a swashbuckling guy with a stunt-man mentality," he explains. "But he's got every type of sword imaginable—samurai, jousting swords, etc." Liefeld is also redesigning other Avengers, including the Vision and a full face-masked Hawkeye. But we've gotta save a few secrets for later, don't we?

MASTER MAN

Picked up from the late 1970s *Invaders* comic, Master Man plays a key role in reviving the Red Skull and his master plans for America today. "He's the Nazi equivalent to Captain America," Liefeld explains. He'll be depicted as much older than Cap, however, because the super-serum he drank hasn't retarded his age. "I picture him as an older Arnold Schwarzenegger-type," he says. "He's a little puffier, but he's still a tall, strong, powerful foot soldier in the Red Skull's war."

THOR

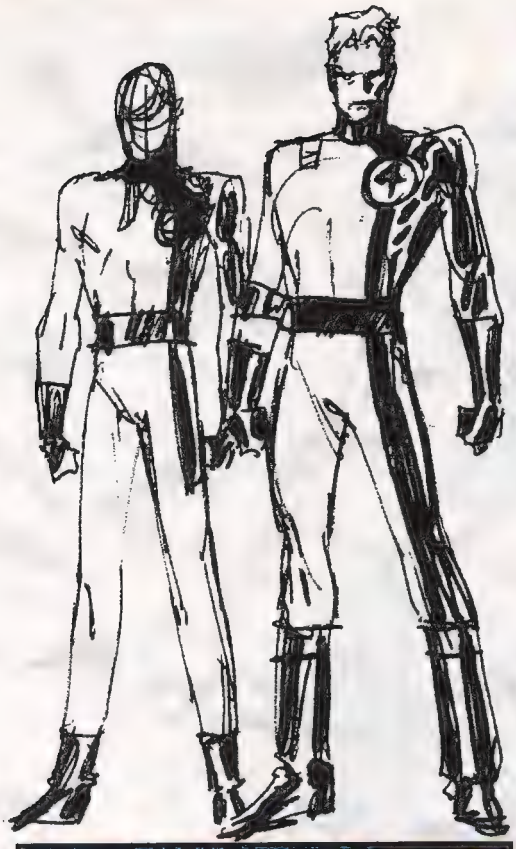
"I hate what they've done to Thor recently," Liefeld states. "The last good run on *Thor* ended with Walt Simonson. I look at what they're doing, and I say, 'This isn't Thor; this isn't what I enjoyed as a kid and what Stan and Jack envisioned.' " To revive the grandeur that he feels has slipped away, Liefeld's created a modified design of the original costume. "Marvel gave us free reign, and I could've gotten a lot more drastic," he says. "But Jack Kirby was the greatest costume designer ever, and he's definitely influenced all of the costumes I've ever done." Thor's cape, which isn't shown here, will come and go depending on the situation, he notes.



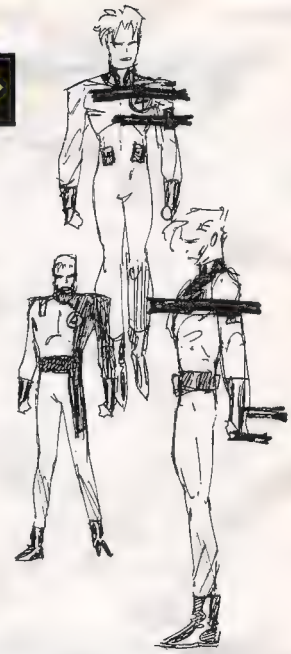
SOUND BITES

"I DON'T THINK WRITERS HAVE DISCIPLINE. THAT'S WHY THEY BECOME WRITERS."
—*Chuck Dixon (Wizard #44, April 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...



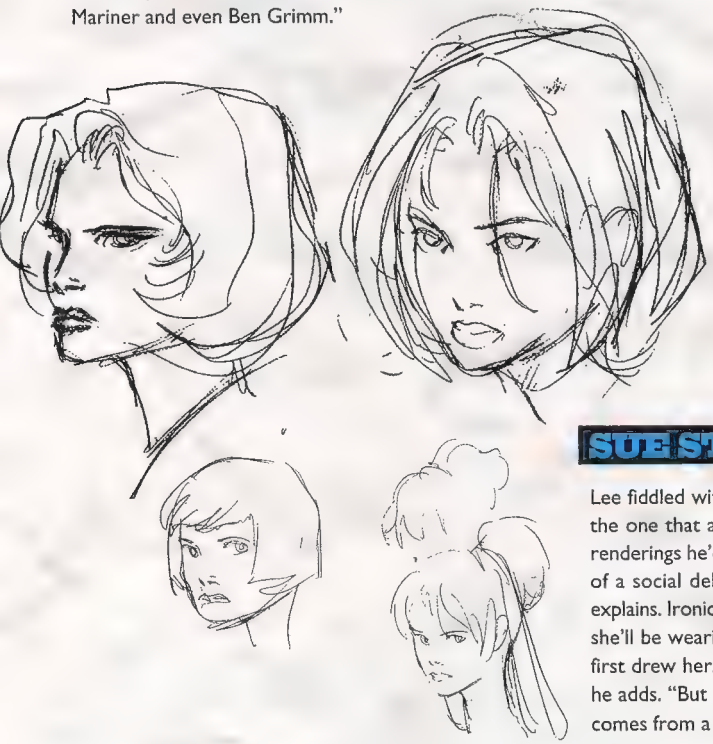
FANTASTIC FOUR COSTUME



The Fantastic Four's new costume design by Lee doesn't represent a dramatic departure from the current version—much to Marvel's surprise, he reveals. "Marvel saw my sketches and said that I could change the characters more," he relates. "But I really want to draw the FF. So I put them in something that looks like it could be an evolution of the costumes that have existed since 1961." The gear they wear—which is better seen in the Reed and Sue sketch—is not superfluous, he adds. "They'll definitely be doing things where they need equipment. I wanted to give them stuff they would use as explorers or scientists, not like the stuff in Batman's utility belt. I see them as adventurers into the unknown, which goes back to the original concept."

REED RICHARDS & SUE STORM

Lee's FF reboot begins with their origin, and as a result, he intends to draw the team considerably younger than they currently appear. "I very much want to reflect the early years, and that should show in the way the characters look." Reed will be about 27 years old (instead of his current 38, Lee estimates), while Sue Storm will be 23, Ben Grimm 29 and Johnny Storm 20. Lee also intends to reintroduce the original love triangle—and possibly make it a rectangle, he hints. "I think the story needs that sexual chemistry between Reed and Sue, along with the tension with the Sub-Mariner and even Ben Grimm."

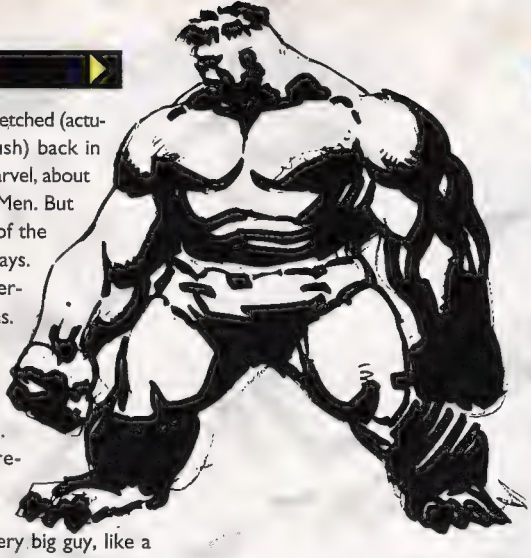


SUE STORM

Lee fiddled with Sue's hairdo for quite some time. In fact, he's decided against the one that appeared on the cover of *Wizard* #55—one of the first finished renderings he'd done of the team. "Sue always has been portrayed as something of a social debutante, and I want to play up her fashion consciousness," he explains. Ironically, in 1996, that means giving her a "retro" look—and that means she'll be wearing a 1960s hairdo similar to the one she wore when Jack Kirby first drew her. "She'll have a number of looks, because she'll want to change," he adds. "But she won't be butch; she'll show some refined tastes because she comes from a wealthy family."

THE HULK

This image of the Hulk was sketched (actually, it was done with a brush) back in 1989 when Lee was still at Marvel, about to begin his run with the X-Men. But it still represents his views of the big green galoot today, he says. "This is the classic, savage version that I know," Lee explains. "To me, that's what the Hulk is about. He's a massive guy, but not muscle-bound, as he's being portrayed today. Right now, he's being represented as more of a body-building guy, and that's not the way I see him. He's a very big guy, like a square block. He should look like a rock."



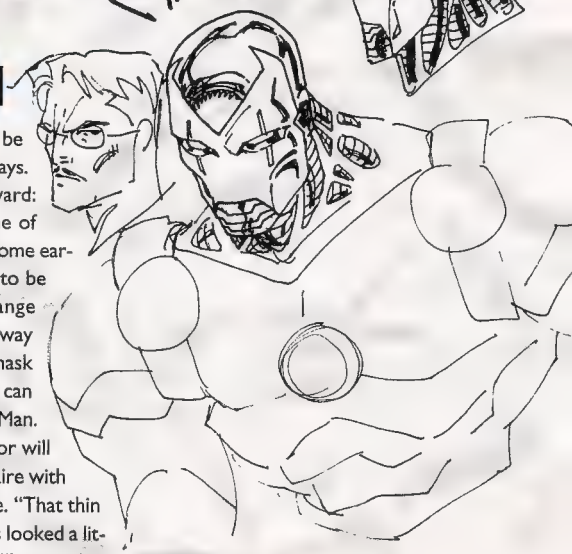
THE THING

Lee's rendition of the Thing will feature a well defined rocky physique, unlike Kirby's early soft-looking version that gradually became sharper over time. "If I was going to be on the book longer, I would start him with that unformed rock look and evolve him," Lee explains. "I think that's a cool progression to take. But I definitely wanted him to have that classic look from the mid-1960s Stan Lee/Jack Kirby run [as inked by Joe Sinnott starting with *Fantastic Four* #44]." Even so, he admits, the more times he draws Ben Grimm, the more refined the look becomes. The Thing's personality will remain intact, along with his piloting skills. And, yes, his friendly feud with the Human Torch will be in full bloom.

HUMAN TORCH

As for the fiery member of the FF, Lee's still not sure just how he'll depict Johnny Storm's Human Torch identity. "When I did the *Wizard* cover, I kept to the same basic flame outline and short, straight lines on his body that always have been used," he explains. "But as I get more into it, I'm trying to decide if I should do something different. I'm not sure I want to change his basic look and screw around with it. But I haven't decided for sure, since I haven't drawn him much yet." That's because the first issue tells the team's origin and Johnny isn't the Human Torch for most of it.

IRON MAN



Iron Man's armor won't be a major departure, Lee says. "It's pretty straightforward: No nose, no bolts, none of that stuff that I hated in some earlier designs. I want him to be sleeker." The only change may be providing some way for the bottom of the mask to roll up so Tony Stark can drink or eat, *a la* Spider-Man. The man inside the armor will be a 30-year-old millionaire with a mustache and a goatee. "That thin mustache by itself always looked a little cheesy," Lee laughs. "I wanted to make him more hip and give him a roguish look." And Tony's bad heart remains a focal point, he stresses. "His heart condition is the essence of Iron Man and a big part of who he is."

Craig Shutt, who peeked into Alex Ross' *Kingdom Come* sketchbook in issue #57, wouldn't mind being rebooted to lose a little of his history.

SOUND BITES

"I FIGURED, SINCE THE COMIC INDUSTRY IS DOMINATED BY THE MALE CONSUMER, THEY'D DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING TO GET THEIR HANDS ON A *HELLINA* NUDE VARIANT COMIC."
—*Lightning Comics' Steven Zyskowski (Wizard #44, April 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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THE WIZARD Q&A:

THE MAN BEHIND MARVEL LOOKS IN HIS CRYSTAL BALL AND SHEDS LIGHT ON ONSLAUGHT, THE SPIDEY CLONE CONTROVERSY AND THE FUTURE OF THE HOUSE OF IDEAS

BOB HARRAS

Just minutes after exchanging the old grip-and-grin with him, you can already tell: Bob Harras is a good guy. On second thought, let's amend that: In view of the longtime X-editor's recent appointment to one of the most lionized positions in all of comics—Marvel editor-in-chief—decorum probably dictates that we now call him a good *man*. (As the kids at Xavier's School for Gifted Youngsters might say when and if their Ben X-er tastes ever hit that overdue hip-hop phase, you gotta give Harras his propz.)

Still, this is also a man caught in a maelstrom. Harras has claimed the top spot at a time when Marvel's comic numbers have fallen off considerably, Spider-Man's widely savaged Clone Saga is doing an about-face, and the "prodigal sons" of Image are rolling up their sleeves to give their old employers a transfusion. Marvel, however, contends that all this has simply served to separate the superhero wheat from the super-hero chaff. The company readily concedes that the recent layoffs of longtime editors Carl Potts, Bob Budiansky and 16 other edit staffers were unfortunate. But an omen of something bigger, something darker? Hardly. Funny, though, how even the mere perception of internal headaches often proves headache-inducing in itself. Certainly it's a principle which has made Harras' days in the big chair more crazed than they otherwise might be. And the story only gets wackier: Last April, happily if just a bit hectically, Harras watched his wife Anne give birth for the first time. To triplets.

A couple of weeks after the big event, *Wizard* momentarily stole Harras away from all his babies—both those in his nursery and the ones in spandex tights—and asked him what it's like to be a rider on the storm.

WIZARD: To say that you've moved into your new post at a time when there's a lot going down would be an understatement on a "Forrest Gump" level. Has it been daunting for you?

BOB HARRAS: Sure. There are days when I wish it was five years ago. And there are days when I just cry on [assistant] Ben Raab's shoulder and say, "Shoot me now." [*Laughs*] But there are also those days that I step back and look at Marvel's line of books and say, "We put out really good comics. Look at what the comics look like now compared to a few years ago. Joe Madureira's stuff on *Uncanny X-Men*, Adam Kubert on *Wolverine* and Andy Kubert on *X-Men*—they look great." And that's a source of pride: "Okay, we're doing good stuff."

You're still working directly on several X-books. Any chance that will have to change?

It may. But when I became editor-in-chief, one of the things I pushed for was that I didn't want to lose my hand in day-to-day editing, because I think that can isolate you. The workload is a lot heavier now, so sometimes things get a little stressed. But I do enjoy it, so I just have to find a greater balance between working on the X-Men and talking to the other editors. That's something I'm learning to do better all the time.

What's your approach to the job and how you'll be handling the Marvel Universe? Is there anything you're determined to do differently than your predecessors?

Not specifically. I mean, there was no agenda where I threw up my arms and went [maniacally], "It's all mine now!" Nothing like that—not during office hours, anyway. [*Laughs*] One thing I would say is that I have a very definite opinion on what a book should look like, and that's an area where I'm trying to make a few more improvements. Let's upgrade the art here, let's do this there. But generally, I'm approaching the Marvel Universe the same way I've approached doing the X-Men for the past eight years: I just try to come up with the most interesting stories, get the best artists on all the books and really look at telling stories through character. That even goes for looking at supporting casts, and seeing what has made some of them successful and some of them less so. I think what I've always started from is character. Now I've just got a whole lot more characters to look at.

You and Spider-Man editor Ralph Macchio both made the point recently that you'll be focusing on Spider-Man's supporting cast in particular.

Spider-Man, I've always said, used to have the best supporting cast in comics. I used to read the book every month not so much to see who Spider-Man was fighting, but what was going to happen in the lives of all those characters. And over time, we've kind of whittled away characters. Peter Parker has been to more funerals than any man his age should. I think a book is more than just the main character, it's the whole environment he exists in, and that's what we're taking a look at.

How did you feel about the drubbing the Spider-Clone saga took?

My reaction to *the* reaction is that it just shows that people out there really care about these characters. And if there's a perception that they've been mishandled in any way, the fans let us know. If Spider-Man was a character that no one cared about at all, we wouldn't have heard anything. So I take that as a positive thing. The Clone Story as a whole was very big, and I think it got a little too convoluted for its own good. I'd say some people maybe judged it a little too harshly, because it can be perceived as a fun ride. But as I've said, everybody's hope is that by the fall, we'll be back to the basics with Spidey. [*EDITOR'S NOTE: In a story that began almost two years ago, readers learned that the Spider-Man (a.k.a. Peter Parker) they had known since 1975 was actually a clone of the real Spidey. The real Spider-Man has since returned and reclaimed the mantle under the identity of Ben Reilly.*]

But there have been so many comics storylines involving new guys in the old familiar costumes over the last few years—why was this the one that backfired?

Again, because there's that affection. There was

BY TOM RUSSO
photos by Craig Blankenhorn

a perception that we were undoing the continuity of the last few years, which I know for a fact wasn't the intent of any of the writers. They were trying to give a sense that anything can happen in Peter Parker's life, but they got a different reaction than they were expecting. I don't think this was a case of thinking of the event before the story. My sense is that maybe things were changed too much as the storyline progressed and fan reaction came in, and that's when things got lost.

Bobby Ewing's infamous return on "Dallas" is an analogy that comes to mind.

Yeah, but with "Dallas" you obviously wasted a whole season watching, because it was all just a dream. Here, it all depends on how you feel about clones. I think the writers' point of view was yes, Spider-Man was Peter Parker, whatever character it was—Ben Reilly or Peter Parker; they were both the same individual, they had just been split at some point. So their perception was, you did read the adventures of Spider-Man all these years, and it was all real. I hope no one thinks this was like "Dallas," because that was a big rip-off. And it ruined the *whole* continuity of "Knots Landing." [*Laughs*]

Name: Bob Harras
Occupation: Marvel Comics Editor-in-Chief
Born: January 11, 1959, Queens, N.Y.
Base of Operations: New York, N.Y.
Career Highlights: Editor of the Peter David/Todd McFarlane run on *The Incredible Hulk*; editor of *The Uncanny X-Men* for the past eight years, beginning with issue #233 and including Marc Silvestri and Jim Lee's stints on the book; eventually rose to X-Men group editor, editing all 10 X-titles; named Marvel's editor-in-chief in the fall of 1995.
Favorite Character: "Strangely enough, when I was a kid, my favorite character was Sub-Mariner. I don't know why—I just thought there was something very cool about him and his whole underwater city. The X-Men didn't even come into play, because I didn't know who the X-Men were."
Favorite Hollywood insights gleaned through his wife's job as a publicist for Universal Pictures: "I've been tapped on the shoulder by Arnold Schwarzenegger and told to get him a drink of water. I was like, 'I'm just here to pick up my wife.' "

Did this whole experience leave you or your staff wary about trying new things?

I don't think so. I don't think anyone here has the sense that we can't take risks or do something different. "The Age of Apocalypse" is an example I use a lot: Beforehand we got a lot of mail and phone calls saying, "Don't do this. Don't toy with our characters. I love the X-Men so much; I can't believe you're going to do this thing." And when it came out, people loved it. Now we get a lot of mail saying, "Bring back 'Age of Apocalypse.' " So some stories are going to be more successful than others, and no one's going to know why. That's the nature of every creative endeavor, I think. Not every show is going to be a #1 hit.

"Onslaught" would certainly seem to indicate you're getting right back in the saddle. How will that storyline play out?

The event will be concluded by the first week in August, when, in order to save the Earth of the Marvel Universe, the Avengers and the Fantastic Four have to sacrifice themselves in a very dramatic way. And in this moment of crisis, they vanish from our perception. The world acknowledges this sacrifice and blames the characters who remain: the X-Men, the Hulk and certain others. The attitude is, "Because of a mutant event, these good-guy heroes, these heroes who had once defended us against Galactus, are gone. Now we're defenseless against mutants." In that context, the world is going to get a lot darker for the X-Men, because people will demand that the government do something. There's panic.

Which is all an element of the "World Without Heroes" storyline that follows "Onslaught."

Right. And that's where we'll see the reactions of various Marvel characters to the fact that key heroes have, to their thinking, died to save the world. What happens then? What happens to the others? There are going to be some Avengers who do not go through this sacrifice—what will they do with their lives now? In a lot of ways, the Marvel Universe is going to be emerging from the rubble of this huge conflict saying, "Where do we go from here?"

Meanwhile, the FF and the Avengers have actually moved over to this other world that Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld have created in their "Unfinished Business" books.

Yeah. You'll see in "Onslaught" that they've all been given a second chance, that a Marvel Universe character—who we're keeping secret—shunts them over and saves them from the ultimate sacrifice. And there's going to be a growing sense that these heroes did not die. They must be someplace else. Doctor Strange is going to search for them through the astral plane and at one point will pop up in Jim and Rob's books, but he won't know where he is. And he's going to say, "Okay, I've found them, they are alive in some parallel world, but we've got to get them back here, because there's going to be a crisis." That's an event that we'll be dealing with next year.

There's been word that Jim and Rob are "rebooting" these characters, and that they'll be handling them the same way John Byrne handled Superman. [*EDITOR'S NOTE: In 1986, writer/artist John Byrne was given the task by DC Comics of relaunching Superman from scratch, making all of the character's previous 48 years worth of continuity null and void.*]

Well, what DC does is different than what we do. To my mind, our continuity is too important to sacrifice like that. Again, it's the "Dallas" thing: I don't want to tell any reader, "You spent 35 years reading the FF; well, guess what? None of it really happened." That's not what's going to happen. Every story told since 1961 is part of this ongoing saga we call the Marvel Universe, and that includes the Lee-Liefeld thing. So no, for good or ill, we're not doing what John Byrne did. Yes, there will be origin stories done in a new '90s way. But you'll see as the storyline progresses that there's a reason for all this. You know, with "Age of Apocalypse," we gave the X-Men a new origin, but it was a parallel world, and we explained where it all came from. This will be similar. We're just trying to maintain the organic quality of the Marvel Universe.

Was there any deliberate message Marvel was trying to send to its fans and the industry by making the "Unfinished Business" deal?

I don't think there was any intentional message, but it does show—and this may sound a little boastful—that Marvel characters are inherently strong characters. The fact that Jim and Rob are coming back to do the FF and the Avengers—that these are the characters they care about—shows that inherent strength. When I was out in L.A. last time, and Jim and Rob and I were talking, they were literally bubbling over with all these ideas about what they were going to do: "Remember when Stan Lee and Jack Kirby did this? Remember this story?" There was a real affection, and that's something I don't think you feel for a lot of characters at other companies.

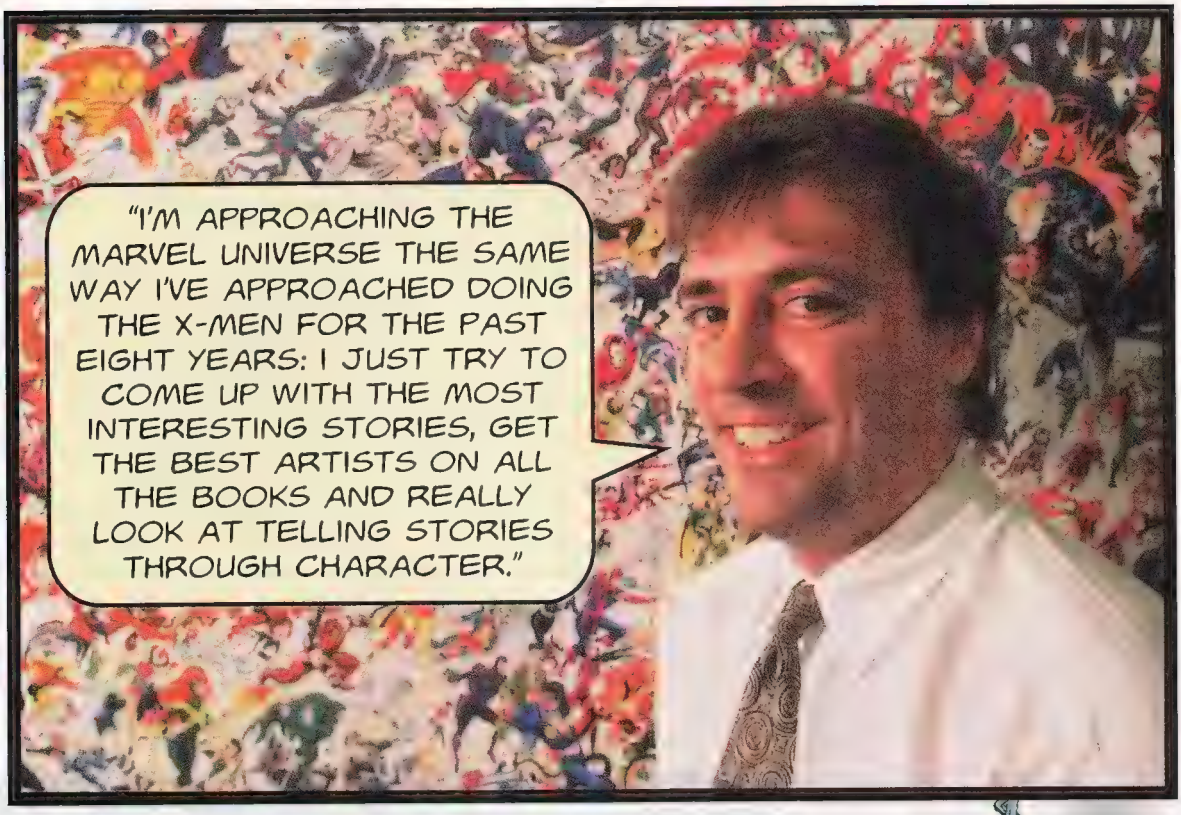
Wasn't losing Mark Waid on *Captain America* a misstep in making the deal? The book was already making quite a comeback.

I think what Mark and Ron Garney were doing on Cap was phenomenal. Everyone here said the book was coming back to what a Marvel book should be, and it was really, really exciting. Would we have liked to see it continue? Yeah. That's one of the things that you have to adapt to. I know

SOUND BITES

"I SHOOT POOL RIGHT AND I CAN'T TELL YOU THE OTHER THING WITHOUT GIGGLING."
—Wizard *Production Director Douglas Goldstein on his right-handed abilities*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...



Mark was disappointed, but as I told him, nothing is the be-all, end-all. It doesn't mean he and Ron can't do *Captain America* again at some point.

Was there an assumption made that Mark would just go work on the books with the Image guys?

I believe that Rob called Mark and made him the offer of writing Cap with him, and that Mark declined. But the offer has been clearly made to Mark that if he wants to do other projects here at Marvel, he is more than welcome. He'll be working on *X-Men* for as long as he wants.

Will there be any more characters licensed out? And why did Marvel resort to this in the first place?

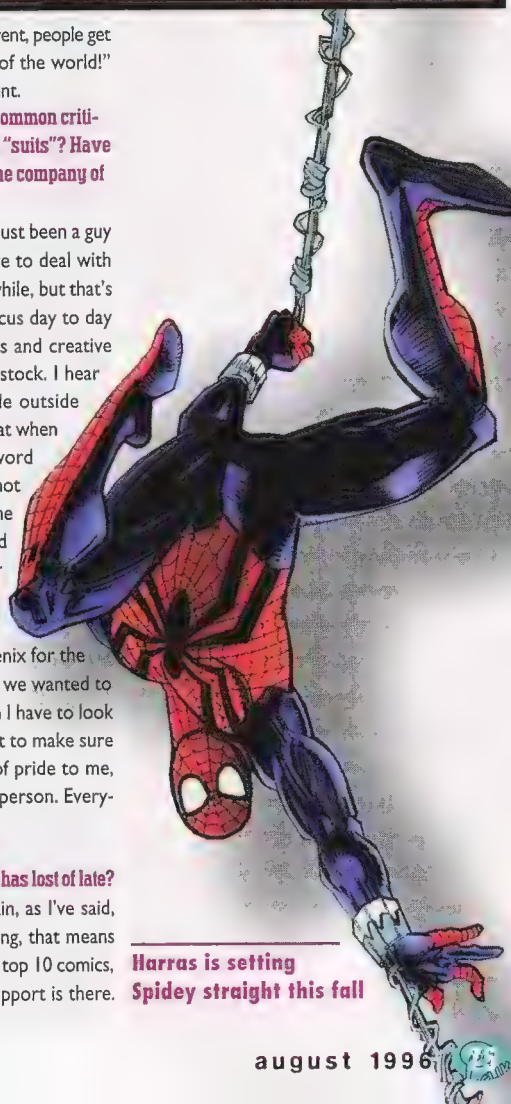
[*Politely*] Well, they're not licensed out. That's a term I want to make clear. Jim and Rob are working for Marvel Comics. They are being paid by Marvel to do *Fantastic Four* and *The Avengers*, just as Scott Lobdell is paid to write *The Uncanny X-Men*. I remember vaguely that at one point in the '70s, *Captain America* was handled entirely by Jack Kirby [*EDITOR'S NOTE: These were issues #193-#214.*]. He was totally in charge of the character for about a year, I think. Jack co-created Captain America, so the situation was slightly different, but we have done this before. And that was not licensing out, it was just giving Jack control for a period of time. So why did we do this? We wanted to generate excitement for the older characters, and the feeling was that Jim and Rob could bring that excitement. It obviously brought attention to these characters. But really, I do want to stress that they're not being licensed. I mean, I got phone calls about that, about rumors that we were giving Spider-Man to Topps—none of it's true. It's just a slightly different way of doing things. I think anytime something is new and different, people get all agitated and say, "It's the end of the world!" when what it is is a publishing event.

How do you feel about the all-too-common criticism that Marvel is just a bunch of "suits"? Have you got any particular plan to rid the company of that label?

Ever since I've worked here, I've just been a guy who likes comic books. Do I have to deal with the suits? Yeah, every once in a while, but that's part of the territory. My main focus day to day is dealing with artists and writers and creative people. I don't worry about the stock. I hear about it *ad nauseam* from people outside this company, but I can tell you that when we have editorial meetings, the word "stock" never comes up. It's just not something I'm interested in. No one has ever come down to me and said, "You know, *The Further Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix* #1 had an impact on the stock." I wanted to do Cyclops and Phoenix for the origin of Mister Sinister, because we wanted to tell a good story. Does that mean I have to look at sales figures? Of course. I want to make sure these books sell—it's a matter of pride to me, as it should be with any creative person. Everyone wants to be a success.

How do you plan on winning back the fan and creator support Marvel has lost of late?

I think we have fan support. Again, as I've said, when you hear people complaining, that means they care. If you look at the list of top 10 comics, Marvel comes up a lot, so the support is there.



Harras is setting Spidey straight this fall

And on the creative side, we have a lot of young guys, a lot of new artists coming up, so I don't feel bereft of support at all. It may not be the support some people were used to in the past. But Jim and Rob working for Marvel again? That's creative support. So I think that's a perception that's not based in any way on reality.

But we've seen some examples to the contrary. When *Wizard* asked Dan Jurgens about his brief *Sensational Spider-Man* stint recently, he said that things are so chaotic at Marvel, he found it "almost impossible to do good work."

Dan may have found his Spider-Man experience a little frustrating, and I apologize for that. But on books like Spider-Man and the X-Men and Marvel in general, you're part of a writing team, and what you write has an impact on what others are writing. So there is sometimes a frustration level there. You don't have total freedom, because you have to share that freedom with other writers. I don't know if that's what Dan was referring to specifically, but I do believe that Ralph Macchio and Dan have talked about doing other things some time.

We'll be on the lookout for that. Any other projects to keep an eye on?

We're going to be doing a three-issue limited dealing with Bishop's future called *XSE*. We're doing an Elektra ongoing series. And Peter David is going to be doing a Hulk-versus-Hercules one-shot with Mike Deodato, just a fun battle-of-the-titans book.

How about creators to watch?

Cary Nord is developing *Daredevil* into something really special. He's growing every issue. Chris Bachalo is back on *Generation X*, which I think is great. The Kuberts and Joe Madureira on the X-Men books. John Romita Jr. and Mike Wieringo on the Spider-Man titles. Carlos Pacheco is going to do the FF for its final two months before "Unfinished Business," then go back onto *Excalibur*. Steve Skroce on *X-Man* and *Amazing Spider-Man*. John Paul Leon is doing work on *The Further Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix*, stuff that's different for an X-book. There are a lot of guys. That I came up with so many names that quickly just shows that we've got a lot of good people who are very excited about doing these things.

But some people point to Marvel's decreased output and the Lee-Liefeld deal and say, "See? Looks like Image left behind a talent vacuum that was insurmountable after all."

No, there are always new people. Sometimes they take a while to come along and get to that level where you say, "Okay, now you can do a book." But I think it would be a boring job if it was always, "Okay, we've got these guys on the book, and we've got them forever." I think part of the fun sometimes is the challenge you face when a bunch of people all leave at the same point. You've just got to be able to get new people together and hit the ground running. W

Tom Russo wonders if Bob Harras' whole "triplets" thing isn't secretly just some bizarre new twist in the Clone Saga.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED

What follows are the Top 10 Marvel comic book series that editor-in-chief Bob Harras feels are his signature books. Miss them at your peril.

UNCANNY X-MEN—"It has the top creative team in the industry right now. The growing talent of Joe Madureira, the amazing coloring of Steve Buccellato and Scott Lobdell's writing make for an incredible combination."

X-MEN—"When you talk about these two titles [*Uncanny* and *X-Men*], you're talking about the same level of quality and excitement."

X-FORCE—"In the coming months we'll discover more about the origin of Shatterstar and who he really is and where he's from. Could this mean the return of everyone's favorite lucky X-Man?"

GENERATION X—"The return of Chris Bachalo in issue #17 says it all about this book."

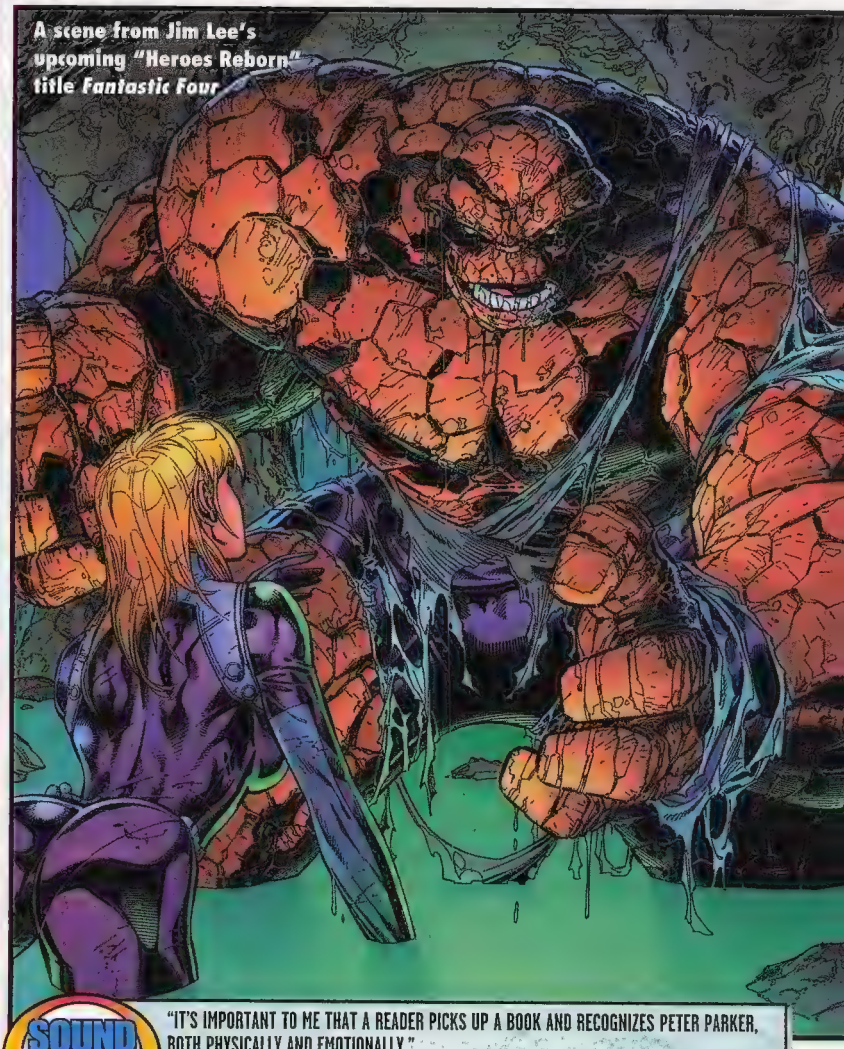
WOLVERINE—"Daredevil's former girlfriend Elektra is the one whose task it is to lead the now-feral Wolverine back to the path of the righteous warrior. In September, she'll be in her own series."

X-MEN: ONSLAUGHT & ONSLAUGHT: MARVEL UNIVERSE—"These are the bookends to this summer's biggest storyline, one that will change the face of the Marvel Universe."

X-MEN: ASKANI'SON—"It not only highlights the talents of penciler Gene Ha, it also explored another chapter in the life of the man called Cable."

X-MEN/CLANDESTINE two-part limited series—"This is where the two supergroups meet. Alan Davis is one of the industry greats, and this is a wonderful opportunity to work with him again."

SPIDER-MAN—"All the tremendous talent coming on board the Spider-Man titles—including Mike Wieringo, Steve Skroce, Luke Ross and Klaus Janson—promise to make this the most exciting period ever in the web-spinner's long and colorful history. Don't miss the magic!"



A scene from Jim Lee's upcoming "Heroes Reborn" title *Fantastic Four*

SOUND BITES the best quotes of the last 5 years...

"IT'S IMPORTANT TO ME THAT A READER PICKS UP A BOOK AND RECOGNIZES PETER PARKER, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY."

—*Spider-Editor Danny Fingeroth, before Marvel sent in the clones (Wizard #26, October 1993)*

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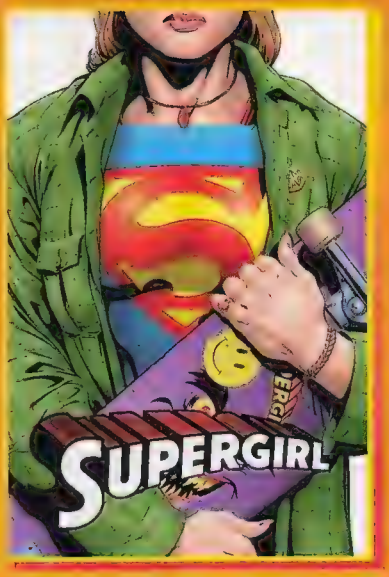
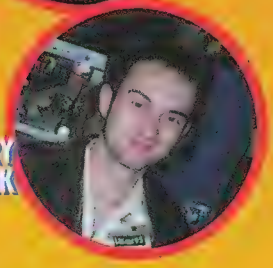
You'd think that with a brand-spankin'-new title by writer Peter David and artist Gary Frank coming out, Supergirl's social schedule would be pretty full. Well, it is.
But she's gonna circle a day on her calendar and make it available just for one of her readers.



How To Play

Huh? Whodawhat?
That's right, Melvin. There's a day Supergirl is keeping open for a date with a *Wizard* reader. Wanna be her lucky escort? All you have to do is tell us where you'd go to dinner with her and what movie you'd see. Nothing more. Now how simple is that? Fill out the entry form and tell us your dinner-and-a-movie combo. The best entries will win...



COURTSHIP PRIZES

Grand Prize (1): One reader whose combo we think would make for the best date will receive that date—with the Maid of Might herself—in the pages of a future issue of *Supergirl.* Upon completion of a release form (We won't make you sign it in blood. Honest.), the winner's likeness will be drawn into a future issue as Supergirl's date. 'Course, after that, Peter David will probably kill you off. But hey—easy come, easy go.
Oh yeah. The Grand Prize winner will also receive a one-year subscription to *Supergirl* and 25 complimentary copies of the issue in which they appear.

Second Prize (10): Ten readers who also come up with some swell dates will receive a one-year subscription to *Supergirl* and a copy of *Supergirl* #1 (Out in July!) autographed by Peter David and Gary Frank.

This contest is sponsored by DC Comics, and they're chaperoning this whole affair. So keep your hands to yourself.

Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Dinner and a Movie Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is August 30, 1996—don't keep Supergirl waiting!

Legal Courtship

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics and their immediate families or Chuck Woolery. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code, along with the place you'd like to have dinner and the movie you'll be seeing, on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Dinner and a Movie Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Come to think of it, anyone who ever appeared on the TV show "Studs" is ineligible too. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by August 30, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on originality and creativity from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press and DC Comics. Judging will take place on September 16, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after September 16, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Dinner and a Movie Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Supergirl Dinner & Movie Entry Form

DEADLINE IS AUGUST 30, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Dinner Venue _____

Movie _____

BUBBLE, BUBBLE, TOIL AND TROUBLE!
Hughes 96
SENSEI

WANNA AVOID TROUBLE?

Wanna avoid the green stuff in that cauldron? Sure you do. So order ***Lady Death: The Crucible #1/2***, available *exclusively* through this one-time-only *Wizard* offer. When you do, you'll make Lady Death happy (always a good thing), and at the same time you'll get:

- A brand-new, all-original Lady Death story by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes and Jason Jensen!
- You-are-there sketchbook material! See Steven Hughes' *original* Lady Death sketches from 1991 and check out the material that went into the very making of this book!
- A special metallic 5th ink on every cover!
- Best of all, this is the official Chaos! Comics prelude to the upcoming ***Lady Death: The Crucible*** mini-series, and is available nowhere else! Get it here or you're shut out!

Order today while the supply lasts or we'll make you bob for apples in that green goo. Trust us—you *don't* want to go there.

CHAOS! COMICS

THE LADY'S LETHAL LEGAL:

No reproductions of this coupon will be accepted. This coupon must be sent in the accompanying envelope, one coupon per comic. You may put additional coupons in the same envelope. Remit by check or money order only. Canadian orders remit $4.00, other foreign orders remit $6.00. All payment must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. Make all checks payable to Wizard Press. Offer good only while supply lasts. Please allow eight to 12 weeks for delivery. Changes of address will not be forwarded unless Wizard Press is notified in writing by September 16, 1996.

THIS OFFER EXPIRES SEPTEMBER 16, 1996–JUMP ON WHILE IT'S STILL ALIVE!

LADY DEATH ™ & © BRIAN PULIDO

THE HEAT IS ON!

Wizard's guide to this summer's hottest reading

By Matthew Brady

HEY, YOU!

Need something cool to read while you sit by the pool this summer working on tanning a body so pale it'd make a beluga whale envious? Well, because we like ya, *Wizard* has pulled out all the stops and cashed in all our favors to find out what's coming up in some of the hottest books this summer.

Plus, we also check out what's coming up in 1997. Hey—who loves ya, baby? Remember, wait a half hour after reading this article before you get back in the pool—don't want to get a mind cramp or nuthin'.

Title: X-Men

Creative Teams: Mark Waid, Andy Kubert and Cam Smith (*X-Men*); Scott Lobdell, Joe Madureira and Tim Townsend (*Uncanny X-Men*)

What You Should Know: To fend off armegeddon in the impending "Onslaught" crossover, our merry mutants must enlist the help of Marvel's other big guns: namely, the Fantastic Four and Avengers.

Coming Up: Um, well..."Onslaught" is what's coming up. Not much is being leaked about the meat of the crossover, except that it will result in the demise of the FF and much of the Avengers, or so everyone thinks. And as far as everyone in the Marvel Universe knows, the Avengers and FF are dead and human society will blame mutants for it. If the X-Men thought they had problems before, they were very wrong.

Around the Corner: In the wake of this anti-mutant sentiment, Bastion and his multi-national task force of mutant hunters will come after the X-Men in full force, plus the possible election of Graydon Creed. (Are we seeing shades of "Days of Future Past" were mutants are placed in concentration camps run by the deadly Sentinels?) Plus, expect changes in Archangel, as well as the appearance of a certain waterfowl.

The Inside Dirt: Scott Lobdell becomes the lone X-writer later this summer as he will also be taking over the writing of *X-Men* later this summer. Mark Waid is expected to move over to a new Ka-Zar series with *X-Men* penciler Andy Kubert sometime next year.

Title: Batman

Creative Teams: Doug Moench, Kelley Jones and John Beatty (*Batman*); Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan and Scott Hanna (*Detective Comics*); Chuck Dixon, Jim Balent and Bob Smith (*Catwoman*); Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Ray McCarthy (*Robin*); and Alan Grant, Dave Taylor and Joe Rubenstein (*Batman: Shadow of the Bat*)

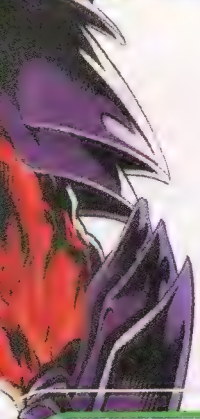
What You Should Know: After finding out that Ra's al Ghul was responsible for releasing the virus in the "Contagion" storyline, Batman, Robin and every other hero in Gotham set out to bring Ra's down in "Legacy," a seven-part crossover that spans the globe in search of Ra's, and finally put an end to his maniacal eco-terrorism.

Coming Up: Following the conclusion of "Legacy," things will settle down for Batman and company...slightly. *Batman* #535 will be a double-sized issue that introduces the Ogre, a new major Batman villain. Batman will be involved in "Darkest Night," and Man-Bat will show up for a three-issue storyline that's triggered by events in the crossover.

In other Bat-books, Doug Moench will kick off a stint on *Catwoman* with "Catwoman: Year Two," recounting how Catwoman first meets up with Two-Face, the Joker and the Penguin.

Around the Corner: A lot of plans are in the works to tie-in with next summer's fourth Batman flick, "Batman and Robin." Expect to see at least three graphic novel tie-ins, including Poison Ivy, Mr. Freeze and a pre-Oracle Batgirl. Word from the Bat-offices is that they're taking a wait-and-see attitude about re-introducing a Batgirl character to the Batman books. If the fans go nuts for her in the movie (and hey, who wouldn't go nuts for Alicia Silverstone as Batgirl?), a new Batgirl just may show up in the comics.

The Inside Dirt: A few creative shuffles will take place in the Batcave over the next couple of months. Chuck Dixon will leave *Catwoman* for the upcoming *Nightwing* ongoing series and be replaced by Doug Moench.



Title: Gen13

Creative Team: Brandon Choi, J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

What You Should Know: The group of superpowered teens have been through some tough times recently: the team's leader, Fairchild, was possessed; their mentor, Lynch, has become more elusive and secretive about their missions; and the effects of the "Fire From Heaven" crossover have left them physically and emotionally exhausted.

Coming Up: The kids will learn that, despite their powers, they can still be helpless against one of young America's toughest foes: college administration. The Gen13ers will be applying for college at the University of California at San Diego, and start classes this fall.

On a personal level, we'll see Fairchild react to the return of her father, Alex Fairchild, who's been hanging out with pirates since his disappearance years ago. Also, Grunge and Freefall will get much closer in their relationship, something that will cause team members to react in different ways.

Around the Corner: Nothing is set in stone at this date, but fans can generally expect the same kind of action, adventure and intrigue along with a light touch of humor that they're used to. One major plan for 1997 is the Gen13/Generation X crossover. Written by Choi and drawn by Campbell, the crossover is slated for a mid-'97 release. And there's also that rumor that Campbell really likes Batman...

The Inside Dirt: *Gen13* #13 will be a very special issue as it will actually be three different books: #13A, #13B and #13C. Each issue will be 13 pages long and cost $1.30. The story will have 13 guest stars (see the theme here?) including: Spawn, Hellboy, Madman, the Maxx, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Francine and Katchoo from *Strangers in Paradise*, and one guest star so secret and so surprising, that fans will just have to wait for the book to come out to see who it is.

Title: Superman

Creative Teams: Karl Kesel, Stuart Immonen and José Marzan Jr. (*Adventures of Superman*); Dan Jurgens, Ron Frenz and Josef Rubinstein (*Superman*); David Michelinie, Tom Morgan, Tom Grummett and Denis Rodier (*Action Comics*); Louise Simonson, John Bogdanove and Dennis Janke (*Superman: The Man of Steel*); and Roger Stern, Paul Ryan and Brett Breeding (*Superman: The Man of Tomorrow*)

What You Should Know: Caving in to pressures from all sides, Lois has recently called off her engagement to Clark Kent (Superman). Both have tried to find other pursuits to occupy their time, and have been somewhat successful in moving on with their lives. Meanwhile, villains have been relentlessly attacking Superman on a near-regular schedule. Most recently, Brainiac possessed Superman's body and used it to cause worldwide disasters.

Coming Up: Wanting to get Clark out of her mind, Lois will take the post as the *Daily Planet*'s foreign correspondent, and leave Metropolis for an undetermined amount of time. Clark's life will get busier as well, as he must stand in as editor-in-chief of the *Planet* for the ailing Perry White.

Since Clark's powers are sun-based, he'll be up a creek without a paddle in this fall's "Darkest Night," DC's company-wide crossover where the sun is snuffed out. Once the crisis is over, however, his powers don't come back right away, and second rate villains pile on him faster than elementary school bullies jump on a fat kid at recess. Tired of the beating, Clark tracks down some superpowered help to recharge his powers.

Keep an eye out in September as Superman vet Tom Grummett takes over the penciling chores of *Action Comics #727*, while later this year, *Flash* penciler Paul Ryan picks up Grummett's old duties on *Man of Tomorrow*.

The Superman Winter Special will team the Man of Steel with the Legion of Super-Heroes, whose members are trapped in the 20th century following a chronal catastrophe in the team's own century.

Around the Corner: 1997 will see the Elseworlds mini-series, *Superman: Red Son* by Mark Millar and Dave Johnson. Set in the first half of the 20th century, the story looks at what would happen if the rocket carrying the baby Superman would've landed in the Cold-War Soviet Union.

The Inside Dirt: It's a safe bet that creators are already lining up to ask for Superman projects for 1998, Superman's 60th anniversary. Rumor has it that Mark Waid has already expressed interest in doing a Superman anniversary special, perhaps with *Kingdom Come* collaborator, Alex Ross, who has also expressed interest in a project for Supes' birthday bash. (Hmmmm...)

Title: The Flash

Creative Team: Mark Waid, Oscar Jimenez and José Marzan Jr.

What You Should Know: Having once again bounced from the Speed Force into the time stream, Wally West (Flash) has been trying to return to the 20th century, but keeps making pit stops in the future. Unknown to him, John Fox (the Flash from the 27th century) has traveled to Wally's time, and he's been putting the major moves on Wally's girlfriend Linda, after telling her that Wally will never return from his trip through time.

Coming Up: Once Wally finds his way back to the 20th century, he'll have to deal with the fact that someone has taken his place in the eyes of Keystone City, and possibly in Linda's heart. There will be conflict, but not necessarily the knock-down, drag-out, bare-knuckle brawl fans may expect.

Following the aftermath of that, the next story arc, "Presidential Race," will pick up. Convinced that one of the candidates is not the good guy (or perhaps even the human guy) he claims to be, Wally must prove it to the rest of the country before the bad guy's elected, and moves into the Oval Office.

Around the Corner: *The Flash Winter Special*, written by Waid and Brian Augustyn, will team Flash with Nightwing, reminding fans that the two are best friends, despite all their solo superheroing.

Flash and Green Lantern will team up again in early '97 in a two-issue prestige format mini-series entitled, "Fast Friends Part 2." The story promises to be a tribute to the classic Silver Age Flash/Green Lantern team-ups and will also feature the Golden Age GL and Flash.

The Inside Dirt: Starting with issue #119, longtime *Fantastic Four* artist Paul Ryan will become the book's new regular artist, turning Flash into the home of jilted "Unfinished Business" creators.

SOUND BITES

"I GUESS MY FRIENDS THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY COOL BECAUSE THE BATHROOMS IN THE HOUSE WERE FILLED WITH COMICS."

—*Adam Kubert on growing up Kubert (Wizard #38, October 1994)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years.

Title: Spawn

Creative Team: Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo

What You Should Know: Under attack from all sides lately, the toll has been great on Spawn, and his costume—a sentient neuroparasite—has taken the most damage, while growing increasingly independent. Recently, when Spawn's former pally Terry Fitzgerald became terminally ill, Spawn realized that the only way for Terry to live was to use his powers to save Terry's life. Traumatized by this use of power, Spawn's costume transported Spawn to Hell.

Coming Up: Spawn won't have time for any R&R while he's in Hell. He'll have to fight his way through Hell's eight levels, finding out along the way that many of Hell's residents would like to see him destroyed. Spawn's adventures in Hell will lead to a confrontation with his boss, Malebolgia. Not too pleased with his performance so far, Malebolgia wants Spawn to get out of Hell, and get back to his job on Earth.

Meanwhile, Burke and Twitch, the two former NYPD detectives will open their own private investigation agency, intent on tracking down Spawn and determining why he's at the center of such a large conspiracy.

Around the Corner: Once Spawn returns from Hell, he's finally going to reveal his identity to Terry, and the two will work together once again. Getting back into the espionage side of things, Spawn will realize that the conspiracy which led to his death runs deeper than he could have ever imagined, and involves more players and governments than he ever thought. Also: Spawn comes to a startling resolution regarding his former wife Wanda Blake—one that will greatly affect both their lives.

The Inside Dirt: Two rough-an'-ready P.I.s need a cool set of wheels, right? Burke and Twitch get just that: a '55 Chevy. The choice of Burke and Twitch's car was no accident, though, since Todd McFarlane happens to own a '55 Chevy himself. Look for Burke and Twitch's Chevy to show up on the convention circuit soon, along with the Spawnmobile.

Title: Green Lantern

Creative Team: Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Romeo Tanghal

What You Should Know: Following Kyle Rayner's (a.k.a. Green Lantern) "Hero Quest," where he teamed up with some of the DC Universe's major heroes in order to better define his role as a hero, Kyle teamed up with Green Arrow, and found out some disturbing things about the man who claims to be his father.

Coming Up: Issue #78 will see Kyle and his girlfriend (and former Darkstar) Donna Troy make a drastic decision about their relationship. Issue #79 will see Sonar take over The Slab, a prison for supervillains. Kyle will be put in the uncomfortable position of teaming up with some of DC's nastiest baddies to take him down. Also, the original Dr. Light will finally return in issue #80, after being trapped in Green Lantern's power battery for a long, long time. While he's been in the battery, he's learned greater control of his powers and is no longer the punching-boy of the DC Universe. Now, Doc Light will be able to control *all* light energy, including Green Lantern's ring. Never having met Kyle before, and expecting to see Hal Jordan (the previous GL who kinda went insane and became a bad guy), ol' Light is pretty ticked at this kid who says he's Green Lantern.

Around the Corner: Kyle must learn to deal with the changes Donna goes through in *Wonder Woman*, and issue #81, according to series editor Kevin Dooley, "will be an issue the entire DC Universe will show up for." Finally, *The Green Lantern Winter Special* will team Kyle up with DC's other light-energy based hero, the Ray.

The Inside Dirt: *Green Lantern* Editor Kevin Dooley was extremely cryptic about Kyle's specific role in DC's fall crossover "Darkest Night," but assures fans that Kyle will play a major role in it, and promises some startling revelations, as well as the return of a character who's been through many changes lately. (Hint: His name rhymes with Al Bordan.)

Title: Spider-Man

Creative Teams: Todd Dezago, Mike Wieringo and Richard Case (*Sensational Spider-Man*); Tom DeFalco, Mark Bagley and Larry Mahlstedt (*Amazing Spider-Man*); Howard Mackie, John Romita Jr. and Al Williamson (*Spider-Man*); and Todd Dezago, Sal Buscema and John Stanisci (*Spectacular Spider-Man*)

What You Should Know: Spider-Man's world was shattered recently when it was revealed that the man who thought he was Spider-Man (Peter Parker) was actually a clone of the real deal (Ben Reilly). After much soul-searching and intrigue, Peter resigned as Spider-Man, content to live the married life with his expectant wife Mary Jane. The clone business behind them, both Peter and Ben seem to have settled into their respective roles—Ben as Spider-Man, and Peter acting as Ben's mentor and confidant.

Coming Up: The relative peace and quiet of Peter and Ben's lives will come crashing down in a big way this summer as Onslaught rips through the Marvel Universe. While neither Peter or Ben will directly confront Onslaught, they will fight against his handiwork, when the mutant-hunting Sentinels invade New York. While all this is going down, Peter, who thought his Spider-powers were gone forever, discovers that they are slowly but surely returning to him.

All this sets the stage for the end of the Spider-Clone Saga in *Spider-Man* #75. The conclusion will pull everything together, including Mary Jane's pregnancy, the roles of Scrier, Traveler and Kaine in the whole clone mess, and the revelation of the one, true Spider-Man from then on.

Around the Corner: Nothing is definite following the conclusion of the clone storyline, but Spider-Man Group Editor Ralph Macchio promises a return of the Spider-Man that fans love, and a return to smaller, single-issue stories.

The Inside Dirt: Creative team change-ups abound! Longtime *Amazing Spider-Man* artist Mark Bagley will leave the title with issue #418 in October, and be replaced by *X-Man*'s Steve Skroce, who described the job as a "dream come true." One of Skroce's first assignments has been to re-design the classic Spidey villain, the Scorpion. Also, the new team on *Spectacular Spider-Man* of writer J.M. DeMatteis and penciler Luke Ross (*New Gods*) begins with issue #239 or #240 in late summer.

Title: Daredevil

Creative Team: Karl Kesel, Cary Nord and Matthew Ryan

What You Should Know: Having picked himself up from some pretty rough times, Matt Murdock (Daredevil) has gained a new, upbeat perspective on life, and returned to practicing law with his old partner, Foggy Nelson in a new firm run by Foggy's cold-as-nails lawyer mom Rosalyn Sharpe. Lately, Daredevil helped police with the capture of Mr. Hyde, who had apparently murdered a young girl. Professing his innocence of the murder, Hyde's defense was assigned to Matt by Sharpe.

Coming Up: The trial of Mr. Hyde wraps up in issue #357 in a big way. Convinced that Mr. Hyde is not guilty of the murder in question, Matt realizes that if he goes free, Mr. Hyde will eventually kill again. However, if he goes to jail, he'd be convicted for a crime he didn't commit. Straight arrow that he is, Matt is determined to prove Hyde's innocence, but if he goes free, Matt will be keeping a close eye on Hyde in the future.

Around the Corner: Following Hyde's trial, Daredevil will spend a couple of issues reacting to the post-"Onslaught" Marvel Universe. Since Onslaught supposedly killed the Fantastic Four, the Avengers, Iron Man and Captain America, there's been a power vacuum in New York. Nothing brings this point home better than the appearance of the Absorbing Man. With the FF and Avengers nowhere in sight, Daredevil realizes that it's up to him to stop the big lug before he breaks New York City into tiny pieces. Following that, a new Gladiator comes gunning for DD in a two-part story called "Gladiator School" (which, by the way, is underworld slang for a maximum security prison—don't ask how we know this). No word yet on whether this Gladiator will have spinning blades on his hands like the old one did.

The Inside Dirt: Look for Daredevil to have closer ties to the Spider-Man line of books in the future. Since both heroes exist in the same city, and have similar powers and attitudes, its only natural that they'd run into each other now and then. Plans are in the works to throw some Spider-Man villains and supporting characters Daredevil's way, including the Lizard, Molten Man, Liz Osborn and a few others.

SOUND BITES

"WHY DON'T YOU WRITE AN X-MEN? I'D BE PROUD OF YOU IF YOU COULD WRITE AN X-MEN."
—*Mikey Gaiman to father Neil (Wizard #40, December 1994)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Title: Legion of Super-Heroes

Creative Teams: Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Lee Moder and Ron Boyd (*Legion of Super-Heroes*); Roger Stern, Tom McCraw, Jeffrey Moy and W.C. Carani (*Legionnaires*)

What You Should Know: The Legion has recently come into its own, independent of all ties to the United Planets. With its new-found independence, the group has taken on a variety of diverse assignments, including a peace-making mission to the planets of Braal and Titan, and solving the mystery surrounding the Emerald Eye.

Coming Up: The Legion will be rocked to its core when half its membership is blown to the 20th century following an explosion during the battle for the Emerald Eye in *Legion of Super-Heroes* #85. Stuck in the 20th century will be: Gates, Saturn Girl, Cosmic Boy, Brainiac 5, Ultra Boy, Inferno and U.P. officer Shvaughn Erin. From this point on, *Legion of Super-Heroes* will focus on the Legion's 20th century branch, while *Legionnaires* will focus on the members who remained in the 30th century.

The 20th century Legion will be teaming up with modern heroes as its members try to find their way back home, while their 30th century counterparts will have to continue with the belief that their friends are dead and gone. Legion tryouts will return in *Legionnaires* #42, as the decimated 30th century team tries to rebuild its ranks.

Around the Corner: While there's a definite end planned for the Legion's 20th century trip, plans call for it to last between 12 to 18 months. In that time, the Legion will team up with a multitude of DC heroes including Superman, Deadman, Impulse, Green Lantern and Captain Marvel. Also, the 20th century Legion will join in "Darkest Night," as the entire DCU tries to restart the sun after the Sun-Eater snuffs it out. Longtime Legion fans should be on the lookout for a Sun-Eater-associated Legionnaire showing up during the crossover. Finally, a major, mystic Legion villain will return in *Legionnaires* #50.

The Inside Dirt: All Legion creators signed year-long contracts in April, which should end rumors about writers or artists leaving. Also, following the success of the Legion of Super-Heroes T-shirt earlier this year, fans should be on the lookout for more cool Legion merchandise coming out later in '96.

Title: Preacher

Creative Team: Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon

What You Should Know: Possessed by a power that was born of Heaven and Hell, and responsible for the death of his entire congregation, former minister Jesse Custer now roams the American West, accompanied by Cassidy, an Irish vampire, and Tulip, a gun-toting beauty with a killer attitude to match.

Coming Up: *Preacher* #17 will serve as an epilogue to "Hunters," and also as a prologue to the next story arc, "Crusaders" which begins in issue #19. Also in #17, Cassidy will find himself carted off to France by the guardians of the Holy Grail, who think he's actually Jesse Custer. Realizing that Cassidy's been kidnapped, Jesse and Tulip head to France to rescue him.

In issue #18, a flashback story set in the Vietnam War, we'll finally learn just how Jesse got that Fxxk Communism lighter he's been carrying around. Issue #19 promises the return of the Saint of Killers to the pages of Preacher, along with battles involving the Grail Commandos and the mysterious leader of the Grail Order.

Around the Corner: We'll finally learn when Cassidy actually started to suck...blood that is, in issue #25. Set in 1916 Ireland, the two-part story promises a healthy dose of Irish politics with a helping of vampires. And coming up in issue #27, according to *Preacher* Editor Axel Alanzo, "Things start to fall apart."

The Saint of Killers mini-series will wrap up in September, concluding the post-Civil War origin of the man who would one day be resurrected as the patron saint of all who kill, and sworn enemy of Jesse Custer. Following that mini-series in October is *Preacher Special: The Story of You-Know-Who* which tells the origin of the fan-favorite, Arseface. The story promises to show an uncompromising picture of teenage angst and alienation.

The Inside Dirt: In mid-'97, Ennis and Dillon will return to the world of Hellblazer to tell the story of John Constantine's former girlfriend Kit in a one-shot entitled *Heartland*.

Matthew Brady, who wrote the Homage Comics article in this issue, is soooo glad this article is finally seeing print, so he doesn't have to carry all this secret info around anymore, and those guys in the dark suits will stop following him.

WIZARDRY

HOW AN ISSUE OF WIZARD IS MADE IN 22 EASY STEPS

BY JIM MCLAUCHLIN

A *surprisingly* common letter I see when sorting through a month's worth of mail goes something like this:

Dear Wizard,
What do you guys actually do there?
Do you just sit around reading comics all day?

Joe Fanboy
Anytown, U.S.A.

Read comics all day? Yeah, suuurre. This is magazine publishing, kids, and it's hard work. We crank out high-octane, top-shelf, rock-solid entertainment for the masses every month and it don't come easy. This ain't no teddy bear picnic, hot dammit!

But it remains a question we see rather frequently: What do we do here? How is an issue of *Wizard* made?

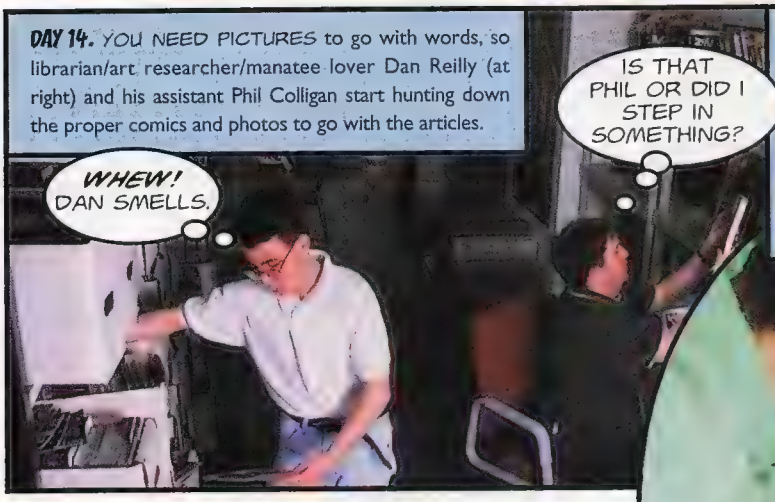
Well, to answer the first question first, this is one of the things we do here: We answer questions. And to answer the second question second, just take a look. We'll tell you exactly how an issue of *Wizard* is made, in chronological order, no less. Just strap in, keep your hands in the car at all times and please note that absolutely no animals are harmed in the making of a monthly issue of *Wizard*.

DAY 1. IT ALL STARTS WITH A PLANNING SESSION that actually takes place a good three or four months before the issue in question even hits your hands. We order pizza and get together in the Office of McCallum and Cunningham. Usual suspects typically include (clockwise from left) Senior Managing Editor Joe Yanarella, Managing Editor Scott Gramling, Production Director Doug Goldstein, Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum, Copy Editor Andrew Kardon, Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky, Editor Brian Cunningham and Yours Truly, Promotions and Publicity Manager J. Joseph McLauchlin.

We talk about what's going on in the biz and see if we have any cool story ideas. We ultimately hash out what direction we want the issue to go in and what feature articles we want to do. We try to determine everything from the cover right down to the "Wizard Profile" and "Casting Call," although lots of changes are always made over the course of the next few months as we hear more news and information changes. In fact, the cover to *Wizard* #55 was changed at the last second when we learned about "Unfinished Business." It was originally slated as an X-Men/Rogue cover, but was hurriedly switched to a Jim Lee Fantastic Four cover, which meant we had to add a feature on "Unfinished Business." As far as direction for issue #60 goes, we went with a big "Five-Year Anniversary" theme.

DAY 3. AS SOON AS WE HAVE AN IDEA of what the heck we're doing, we get people to do it. The high-flying tag team of McCallum and Cunningham creates an in-depth outline and Scott Gramling farms out the work to freelancers. Again, this is all done months in advance, and the stories that our freelancers write don't start rolling in until about a week or two before we actually start working on the issue that the story's going in. Luckily, our able Administrative Assistant Jennifer Cavallo (at right) keeps track of who's doing what, when they're turning it in and how much they're getting paid. It's a big job. And as the work comes in, it's first edited for content by Cunningham and Yanarella, and after passing approval, it moves on to the copy-editing machine of Wilkofsky and Kardon where all the grammatical errors and spelling mistakes are taken care of.

DAY 14. YOU NEED PICTURES to go with words, so librarian/art researcher/manatee lover Dan Reilly (at right) and his assistant Phil Colligan start hunting down the proper comics and photos to go with the articles.

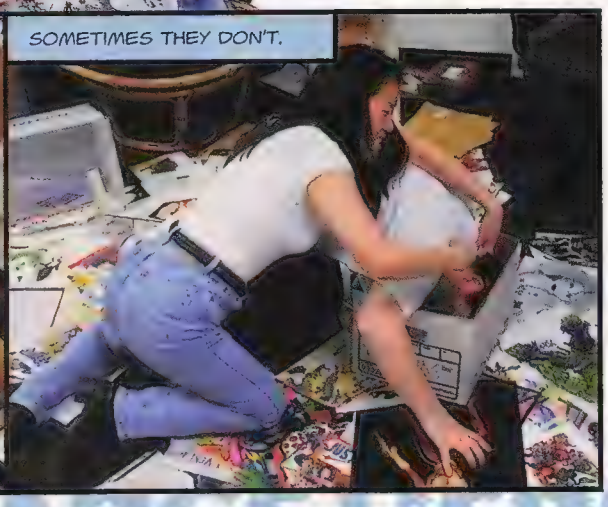


DAY 16. THAT COVER NEEDS TO GET DONE EARLY! We get artist Bart Sears cranking on this issue's Hulk cover as soon as we get permission from Marvel (comic magazines almost always have to get permission from the owner of the property to put a character on the cover) to use ol' Jade Jaws on our frontispiece.

DAY 17. "DRAWING BOARD" is something we can do early in the cycle, so So (Designer Arlene So, that is) and the aforementioned Mr. Reilly start sifting through the mass of entries.

SOMETIMES THEY AGREE...

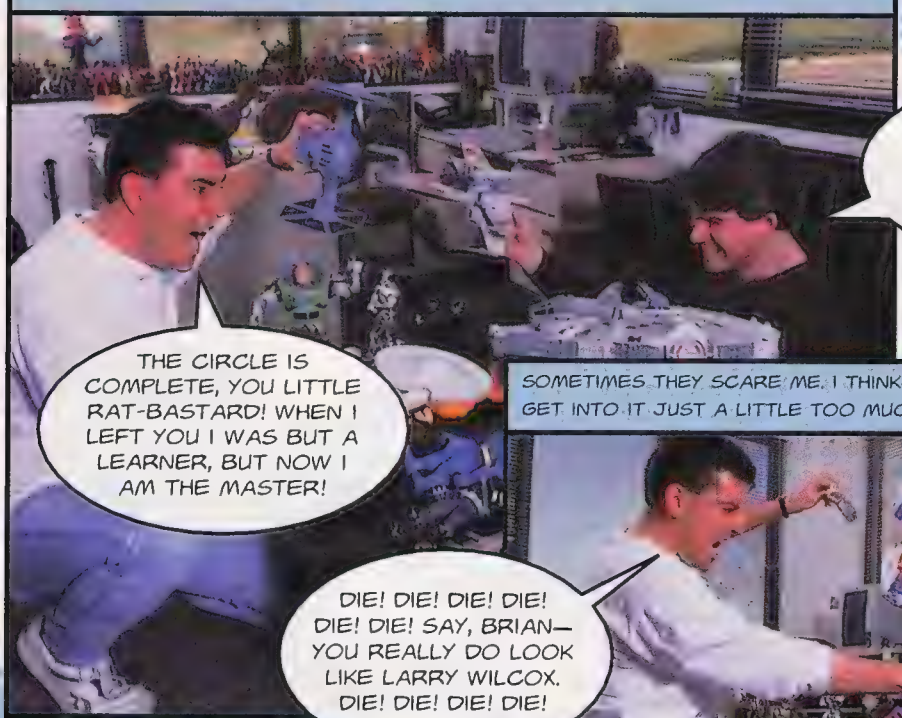
SOMETIMES THEY DON'T.



DAY 24. I START MOWING THROUGH THE LETTERS that go into making "Magic Words." This month, I am aided and abetted by Flat Stanley, sent to me by Joseph Lambert of Chisholm Middle School in Newton, Kan. Stanley helped me a whole lot with my spelling this month.

This be Stanley

DAY 29. THE TOY COLUMN AND TOY PRICE GUIDE have to be done every month, so McCallum and Cunningham stay on top of the trends and big newsie stuff. They call this "research."



"IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, I'VE GOT THE MAP."
—Wizard Senior Managing Editor Joe Yanarella's alter-ego, Convention Joe, at Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

DAY 53. MEANWHILE, BACK IN CHATTANOOGA, TENN... Senior Price Guide Editor and all-around snappy dresser Jon Warren, who's in touch with over 2,000 people a month, pounds down the joe and does the hard work that's needed to compile the comic book price guide.

OH...OH, BOY... OH, MAN! I SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD THAT EIGHTH McMUFFIN...SAY, *SHI* WENT UP THIS MONTH!

DAY 68. AFTER THE PRICE GUIDE NUMBERS HAVE BEEN CRUNCHED, they're sported off to Price Guide Editor Bob Marshall, who inputs the changes and arranges our all-you-can-eat sushi binges. Bob also enters all the changes for our toy, trading card and belly-button lint price guides. After all that, his job is not finished here. See Day 100.

BOB FRIGHTENS ME.

HOLY...LOOK AT THE CRANIUM ON THAT KID!

DAY 74. MARC WILKOFSKY, who wore a tie this day specifically because he knew he was going to be photographed, makes sure "Trailer Park," our movie and TV column, is up-to-the-minute.

DAY 79. ANDREW KARDON COMPILES "JUNK DRAWER," our cool-as-frozen-alligators comic merchandise column. He gets the neatest damn stuff in the mail.

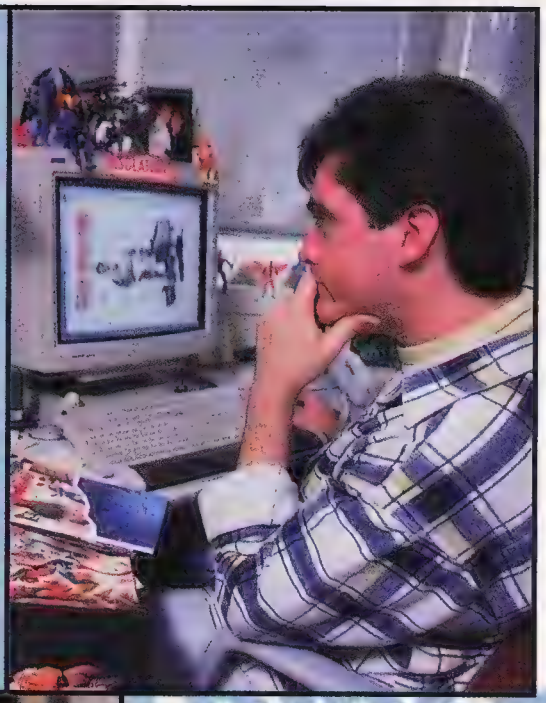
I...I DON'T NEED ANY OF YOU! I DON'T EVEN WANT FRIENDS! I GOT ALL THIS COOL STUFF TO... *SNIFF*... TO KEEP ME COMPANY!

I'M SO LONELY.

YES, LORD WARREN, I WILL DO YOUR BIDDING

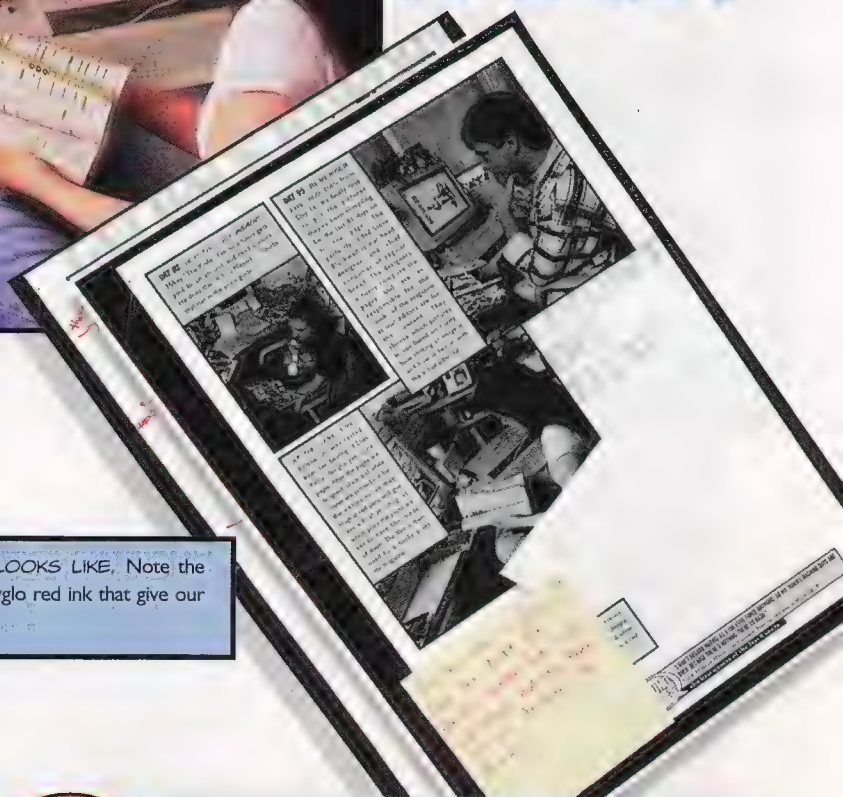
DAY 82. HEY! THIS GUY *AGAIN?* Mikey "The Knife" Fasolo actually gets paid to sit around and read comics. He does the "If You Missed..." blurbs that run in the price guide.

DAY 95. REMEMBER PHIL AND DAN from Day 14? It's finally time to put the pictures they've been compiling for the last 81 days on to the page. The perfectly coifed Steve Blackwell is our head designer and chief consumer of regular bread. The designers actually compose the pages and are as responsible for the "look" of the magazine as our editors are for the content. They choose which pictures to use based on clarity, how striking an image is and how it ties in with the actual editorial.



AT THE SAME TIME, Arlene So, well rested from her beating of Dan Reilly, designs yet more pages. After the pages are designed, black-and-white copies are printed out for the editors to use their magical red pens and give 'em a final proofing, at which point the pages are set to have film made of them. The film is then used to actually print the magazine.

I DIDN'T DO THAT!



AND HERE'S WHAT A PROOF LOOKS LIKE. Note the horribly illegible Post-it Note and dayglo red ink that give our designers eye damage.

SOUND BITES

"*MARVELS* IS SORT OF LIKE A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE BEGINNING OF A SUPERHERO UNIVERSE. *KINGDOM COME* PROVIDES A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE END OF ONE."
—Alex Ross (Wizard #42, February 1995)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

DAY 100. FILM COMES BACK. It's checked out by the staff to make sure everything is just right before it's sent to the printing plant. We can make last-minute news updates and price guide changes here if we need to, but it's pretty expensive to do so at this point because it requires the reshooting of film for whatever pages we change.

If something is big, we change it, no questions asked. Massive news events (like the death of Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel) and huge price guide movements are worth the extra expense it takes to be up-to-the-minute.

DAY 105. THE ISSUES ROLL OFF THE PRESSES! They are hermetically sealed in botulism-free, multi-colored polybags and sent to Your Local Comic Shop, fresh as a daisy for you to enjoy! Whew! That was some month!

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH, it's time for a comic reading break. Yes, we are gettin' paid for this. It's all in the name of making a better magazine. Gotta keep our finger on the pulse, y'know.

The time-space continuum at Wizard Press works a lot like it does in the comics. It takes a lot more than 30 days to make a monthly magazine. While we were putting together *Wizard* #60, we were also working on issues #61 and #62.

And there's even more. We didn't even show you all the other people who allow us to do our jobs. Without a receptionist to answer the phones or customer service people to handle the problems or a circulation department to distribute the magazine or someone to empty the garbage, we'd never be able to write, edit, design or even sit around and read comics.

At the risk of sounding sappy, it's a team effort. Every issue is the culmination of efforts from a number of people. The bottom line is that it's a job. And like any job, we bitch and moan about it from time to time. But all in all, we dig it. We have fun with it. And we hope you do too. **W**

Jim McLauchlin's life got infinitely better with the news that Diamond Comic Distributors is now carrying processed meat snacks. Now if they start handling men's underwear and scotch, he can do all his shopping at the comics store.

Fab Five

Wizard pinpoints the major comic book events of the past five years

By Scott Beatty and the *Wizard* staff

1991

The Big Shots

HOT WRITERS: David Michelinie, Howard Mackie, Chuck Dixon, Fabian Nicieza, Mike Baron

Neil Gaiman

Peter David

John Byrne

Chris Claremont

Jim Starlin

HOT ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri, Jim Valentino, George Pérez, Javier Saltares, Simon Bisley

Todd McFarlane

Jim Lee

Rob Liefeld

Ron Lim

Erik Larsen

ON THE RISE:

Whilce Portacio

Tom Lyle

Bart Sears

Dale Keown

Sam Kieth

HOT TITLES: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, X-Force, Spider-Man, Silver Surfer, Robin II, Punisher, Ghost Rider*

HOTTEST MEAL TICKET: Mutants, Mutants, Mutants

TOP-GROSSING FILM: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" ($204.3 million)
BEST PICTURE: "Silence of the Lambs"
AMERICA WAS WATCHING: "Beverly Hills 90210," "Roseanne"
AMERICA WAS LISTENING TO: Guns N' Roses, Mariah Carey, Garth Brooks
AMERICA WAS READING: *Scarlett* by Alexandra Ripley
POP CULTURE TREND: Sideburns a la "Beverly Hills 90210"

AUGUST 1991

Marvel Makes History with *X-Men* #1

With (count 'em) five variant covers, Marvel adds a new mutant title to its already swelled ranks with the debut of *X-Men* #1 from longtime X-writer Chris Claremont and super-hot artist Jim Lee, who moves over from his *Uncanny* penciling chores. *X-Men* features a more fan-oriented team consisting of Wolverine, Cyclops, Psylocke, Beast, Gambit and Rogue. In the weeks that follow, *X-Men* #1 sells a reported 8 million copies, shattering all previous sales records, including the milestone premieres of Rob Liefeld's *X-Force* and Todd McFarlane's *Spider-Man*.

IN BRIEF...

- Whilce Portacio leaves the newly revitalized *X-Factor* to take over the artistic chores of *The Uncanny X-Men* with issue #281.
- Peter David and Larry Stroman unite to take on Marvel's *X-Factor* #71, featuring a brand-new team comprised of Havok, Polaris, Wolfsbane, Jamie Madrox, Strong Guy and Quicksilver.

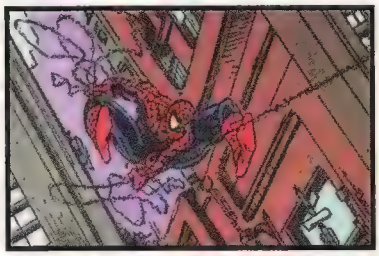
New *X-Factor* team debuts in #71

- After a two-year absence, Alan Davis returns to draw Marvel's *Excalibur*, this time writing the title as well.
- Smmmmokin'! Dark Horse Comics releases *The Mask* #1, while a relatively unknown actor named Jim Carrey is a regular on the mildly successful comedy show "In Living Color."
- *X-Force* #1 is the hottest back issue in the land.
- With little fanfare, a magazine called *Wizard* debuts. Its first issue is mostly black and white, and clocks in at 100 pages.

SEPTEMBER 1991

McFarlane Leaves *Spider-Man*

Fanboys everywhere are saddened to read Todd McFarlane's farewell issue of Marvel's *Spider-Man*



with #16, a "sideways" formatted story concluding in Rob Liefeld's *X-Force* #4. While McFarlane set sales records on *Spider-Man*, he says he's all set to move on to other exciting new projects, perhaps with an all-new creator-owned character.

IN BRIEF...

- Seventeen-year X-Men writer Chris Claremont shocks X-fans by exiting both *Uncanny* and *X-Men* due to creative differences with the editorial staff. Former X-artist and Claremont-collaborator John Byrne is announced as Claremont's replacement as scripter on *X-Men* #4; *X-Men* penciler Jim Lee and *Uncanny* penciler Whilce Portacio are named co-plotters of the X-books.
- Bishop makes his first appearance in *Uncanny X-Men* #282.

An up-close look at Bishop's first appearance

- *Sandman Special* #1 debuts, introducing "Endless" fans to Dream's son Orpheus, as well as "Endless" brother Destruction, who is MIA in the ongoing *Sandman* series.
- In just a month, *X-Men* #1(E) conquers the Top 10 list of back issues, followed closely by *X-Force* #1.

OCTOBER 1991

'Star Trek' Creator Dies

Sci-fi and comic book fans mourn on October 24 when "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry passes away at age 70. It can be argued that there has never been a fan following as faithful as that of Star Trek's. Roddenberry's peaceful vision of the future, where mankind works to espouse morality and freewill, has been seen by the mass media as the reason for its timelessness. Roddenberry spent the past few years with a hand in Trek TV and movie incarnations as a creative consultant. And with Star Trek being more popular than ever, his legacy won't soon be forgotten.

IN BRIEF...

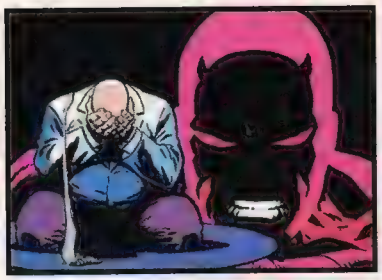
- Valiant adds a third title to its stable with *Harbinger* #1, spotlighting a rookie artist named David Lapham. (Valiant Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter compares Lapham's debut to that of Frank Miller's.)
- Erik Larsen picks up the webbing from Todd McFarlane, taking over Marvel's *Spider-Man* with issue #18.
- Bat-sidekick Tim Drake follows up on his wildly successful first mini-series with the release of the multi-covered *Robin: The Joker's Wild* #1.
- Hot *Lobo* artist Simon Bisley paints *Batman/Judge Dredd: Judgment on Gotham*, the crossover fans had been clamoring to see for years.
- In the back-issue department, *X-Men* #1(E) holds onto the top spot, followed by Whilce Portacio's debut on *Uncanny X-Men* #281. Cable's first appearance in *New Mutants* #87 rounds out the top three.

NOVEMBER 1991

Daredevil Gets Revenge in 'Fall of the Kingpin'

Daredevil gets his payback on the Kingpin in *Daredevil* #300, the final chapter of "The Fall of the Kingpin." After stripping DD of his job, his friends and practically his life, Kingpin's corrupt dealings are exposed by Daredevil, crashing his crime

Heavy Batman exposure continues with the Simon Bisley-painted Batman/Judge Dredd crossover



empire to the ground. But before leaving the country, Kingpin vows he'll be back...

IN BRIEF...

- Batman faces off against Dark Horse's Predator in *Batman vs. Predator* #1.
- Valiant shows its mettle in the release of *X-O Manowar* #1. (So does Paul "Pee-Wee Herman" Reubens as he pleads no contest to charges of indecent exposure in Sarasota County, Fla.)
- In the *Lobo Paramilitary Christmas Special*, DC's follow-up to the super-hot *Lobo* mini-series, the resident psychopath frags Santa's ass! The Easter Bunny's too!
- As L.A. Lakers guard Magic Johnson announces he has tested positive for the HIV virus and will immediately retire from basketball, *Robin: The Joker's Wild* #1 unseats *X-Men* #1(E) to become the nation's hottest back issue.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

Magic Johnson retires

DECEMBER 1991

Liefeld Announces Move to Creator-Owned Project

Rob Liefeld announces that in addition to his monthly plotting, penciling and inking chores on Marvel's *X-Force*, he is going to plot and draw a creator-owned book titled *Youngblood* for budding publisher Malibu. Featuring new characters called Shaft, Bedrock and Chapel, among others, *Youngblood* is expected to begin in February.

IN BRIEF...

- With little hype, first-time penciler Joe Quesada debuts on *The Ray* #1.
- Dark Horse releases *Star Wars: Dark Empire* #1.
- Just as Valiant adds *Rai* to its popular universe, the Soviet Union disbands and is replaced by a Commonwealth of Independent States made up of 11 of the 12 former constituent republics.
- Evil Ernie and Lady Death appear for the very first time in relative obscurity with *Evil Ernie* #1, a black-and-white release from Eternity Comics, an imprint of Malibu Graphics.

Evil Ernie's debut

1992

The Big Shots

HOT WRITERS: Neil Gaiman, Peter David, Jim Starlin, Chuck Dixon, John Byrne

Jim Shooter | Larry Hama | Bob Layton | Fabian Nicieza | David Michelinie

HOT ARTISTS: Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Ron Lim, Erik Larsen

Marc Silvestri | Simon Bisley | Rob Liefeld | Jim Valentino | Whilce Portacio

ON THE RISE:

Joe Quesada | Jae Lee | Art Thibert | David Lapham | Mark Texeira

HOT TITLES: Most Valiant titles (like *X-O Manowar* and *Bloodshot*), all Image titles, Superman titles, X-Men titles, Spider-Man titles and *The Infinity War*

HOTTEST MEAL TICKET: Anything Image, Valiant, mutants, Spider-Man and anyone who can draw like Jim Lee

TOP-GROSSING FILM: "Batman Returns" ($165.7 million)
BEST PICTURE: "Unforgiven"
AMERICA WAS WATCHING: "Seinfeld," "Roseanne"
AMERICA WAS LISTENING TO: Nirvana, Spin Doctors, Extreme, Billy Ray Cyrus
AMERICA WAS READING: *Dolores Claiborne* by Stephen King
POP CULTURE TREND: Lollapalooza—traveling music festival with big name rock bands

FEBRUARY 1992

Image Comics Announced

On February 8, Marvel's top artists Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Erik Larsen (*Spider-Man*), Marc Silvestri (*Wolverine*) and Jim Valentino (*Guardians of the Galaxy*) announce at Silvestri's California home that they are forming a creator-owned imprint for Malibu Comics called Image Comics. In addition to Liefeld's previously announced *Youngblood*, McFarlane (who hasn't done monthly work in five months) will draw a resurrected soldier of hell in *Spawn*, Larsen a

superhero cop in *Savage Dragon*, Lee a government-operated supergroup with *WildC.A.T.s*, Silvestri a cybernetic strike team with *Cyberforce* and Valentino a back-breaking vigilante with *ShadowHawk*. The first Image Comics title to ship will be *Youngblood*, expected in about a month.

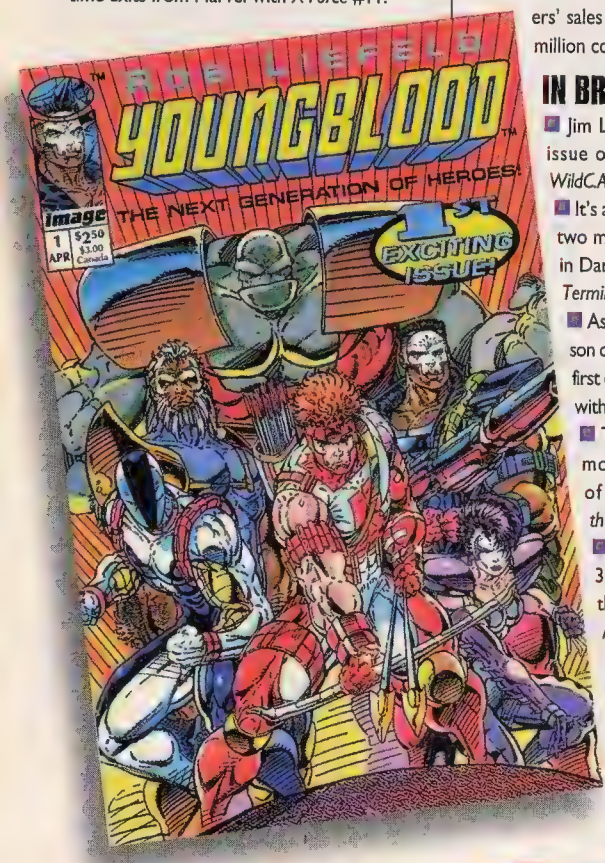
IN BRIEF...

- As *Marvel Comics Presents* hits issue #100, the 16th Olympics Winter Games are held in Albertville, France.
- The time-displaced Bishop officially joins the X-Men in *Uncanny X-Men* #287.
- When serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer receives a sentence of 15 consecutive life terms for his grisly murders, Valiant Comics' jazz-playing guardian of New Orleans is introduced in *Shadowman* #1.

APRIL 1992

Youngblood #1 Ships

Fandom goes wild as Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* #1 ships, albeit almost two months late, from Malibu Comics featuring the government-backed superteam. A flip-book, the issue tells two separate tales: one with the Youngblood "Home Team" (the team that handles domestic adventures) and another with the "Away Team" (for foreign adventures). Aside from its criticism of being extremely difficult to follow, the book is met with huge success selling out nationwide. In the wake of Image's formation, Liefeld in the meantime exits from Marvel with *X-Force* #11.

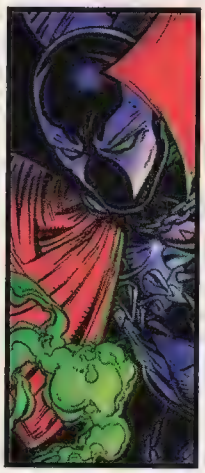


IN BRIEF...

- Yo, Joe! Hasbro announces the return of the 12-inch G.I. Joe...but sadly, sans the kung-fu grip.
- Toy Biz takes another big chunk out of the action figure buyer's pocket by releasing 30 new Marvel figures, including a line devoted to X-Force.

MAY 1992

Spawn #1 Sets Sales Records



As Image Comics hits the ground running, May sees the premiere of superstar artist Todd McFarlane's contribution to the fledgling company with *Spawn* #1. With a costume looking like a weird amalgamation of Spider-Man and Batman, two characters McFarlane had left his mark on, Spawn pulled throngs of comics readers into the tale of Al Simmons—former government hitman turned unwilling servant of darkness—and created an overnight success. The issue sold more copies than any other previous issue not published by Marvel or DC, setting an independent publishers' sales record; it is estimated that 2 million copies are sold off the bat.

IN BRIEF...

- Jim Lee plots and pencils his final issue of *X-Men* as he prepares his *WildC.A.T.s* series set to debut in July.
- It's a heavy metal collision as film's two mightiest mecha-men match up in Dark Horse Comics' *RoboCop vs. Terminator* #1.
- As Jay Leno replaces Johnny Carson on "The Tonight Show," Valiant's first company-wide crossover begins with the release of *Unity* #0.
- The Dark Knight gets another monthly title with the launch of DC's *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #1.
- Spider-Man begins a year-long 30th anniversary celebration in the double-sized *Web of Spider-Man* #90, pitting Spidey against Mysterio.
- In one of comics' lamer gimmicks, DC releases *Eclipso: The Darkness Within* #1, complete with a purple plastic "Eclipso diamond" attached to the cover.

JUNE 1992

Batman 'Returns' to Baffled Fans

With all-star power like Michael Keaton, Michelle Pfeiffer and Danny DeVito behind it, "Batman Returns" had the ingredients of a classic. Classic disaster is more like it. Berated by comic book fans for its lack of plot, ridiculous usage of the Penguin (Why is he even in there, and what's the deal with those stupid penguins?) and Batman revealing his identity to someone *again* ("Y'know, I don't often tell people this—but hey, I'm Batman."), "Returns" proves to be a poor showing and doesn't come close to matching its predecessor in terms of ticket sales.

IN BRIEF...

- Erik Larsen, the third Image co-founder to make it to the comic racks, debuts his *Savage Dragon*. The book, like its Image predecessors, does tremendously well as fans continue to gobble up anything and everything that is Image.
- Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* #1 offers a second-printing. On the flipside, Todd McFarlane promises that no issue of *Spawn* will ever go to a second print.
- DC announces the long-awaited *Nightwing* mini-series, co-written and drawn by Art Thibert.

JULY 1992

Jim Lee Creates Heat with *WildC.A.T.s*

Already a hot commodity since his work on Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men*, Jim Lee brings creator-name recognition to readers of *WildC.A.T.s* #1, Lee's addition to the swiftly growing Image Universe. Another best-selling Image title, *WildC.A.T.s* introduces readers to Spartan, Voodoo, Maul, Grifter, Zealot, Warblade, Void and their mysterious benefactor Emp, as the Covert Action Team begins a series of adventures to rid the Earth of Helspont and his grotesque Daemonites—and Dan Quayle!

IN BRIEF...

- Cannon Films releases the abysmal "Captain America" on video. It's so bad that the Red Skull, originally a Nazi, is Italian here.
- Rob Liefeld begins his second Image title with *Brigade* #1.
- In back issues, Valiant's *Harbinger* #1 unseats those pesky X-Men.

AUGUST 1992

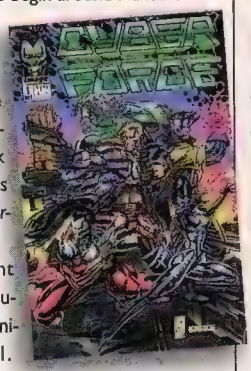
Whilce Portacio Joins Image Bandwagon

Kicking off what is declared "Image Comics Month," Whilce Portacio, popular *Uncanny X-*

SOUND BITES
"SURE, I'VE SEEN THINGS I CAN'T NECESSARILY EXPLAIN. WHEN I WAS VERY YOUNG, I THOUGHT I SAW A UFO. COULD HAVE BEEN AN ALIEN, COULD HAVE BEEN INDIGESTION."
—X-Files *writer Stefan Petrucha in need of Maalox* (Wizard #44, April 1995)
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Men artist, announces that he would be joining the ranks of Image bringing his creator-owned *WetWorks* with him. Described as "America's deadliest strike force," *WetWorks* is a three-issue mini-series slated to begin around Halloween.

IN BRIEF...



- Big-time debuts continue from Image Comics as Jim Valentino's *ShadowHawk* #1 is launched, as is Marc Silvestri's *Cyberforce* #1.
- Marvel's mutant bad boy Cable graduates to his own mini-series with *Cable* #1.
- DC releases *Batman: Sword of Azrael* #1, introducing Azrael and giving penciler Joe Quesada a larger audience to show his wares.

SEPTEMBER 1992

DC Gets Vertigo

In an effort to make its more-mature titles stand apart from its superhero universes, DC announces the formation of sister-imprint Vertigo. Helmed by Group Editor Karen Berger, who oversaw Alan Moore's ground-breaking "mature-themed" work on *Swamp Thing*, fans cheer on the Vertigo line-up: *Swamp Thing*, *Sandman*, *Hellblazer*, *Doom Patrol*, *Animal Man* and *Shade, The Changing Man*.

IN BRIEF...

- In a time when the company could do no wrong, Valiant fires Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter, citing a disagreement in policy. Shooter says he was ousted in a political coup.
- "Batman: The Animated Series" premieres on Fox; its dark, gothic animation and stories make it an instant hit.

Fox TV's "Batman: TAS"

- "I'll trade ya a Johnny Bench rookie for a Cable!" Marvel purchases the Fleer Corporation, one of the largest manufacturers of trading cards.
- Dale Keown leaves *Incredible Hulk* to join Image, bringing *Pitt* with him.
- Marvel heads for future shock as it debuts the first in its "Marvel 2099" line: *Spider-Man 2099* #1 by Peter David and Rick Leonardi.
- Marvel begins the unraveling of the Cable/Stryfe mystery with *Uncanny X-Men* #294, heading up the 12-part "X-Cutioner's Song."
- Rob Liefeld does it again, adding *Supreme* #1 to his Image line-up.

OCTOBER 1992

Superman Co-Creator Joe Shuster Passes Away

Comic creators and fans alike mourn the passing of artist Joe Shuster, who, with friend Jerry Siegel, created comics' most-enduring hero, as well as the mold for which all superheroes have been measured ever since. Beginning with *Action Comics* #1 in 1938, Shuster and Siegel chronicled the adventures of comics' Man of Tomorrow before their contract expired in 1948. Having sold the rights to Superman to DC Comics, Shuster and Siegel fought the company in court to regain creators' rights and ownership. However, it was not until the release of "Superman: The Movie" in 1978 that DC was pressured into giving the creators their due, awarding each annual stipends for the rest of their lives. Shuster's passing causes many comics creators to reflect on the legacy he helped add to their rich medium, as well as the debt they owe him for their art and inspiration.

IN BRIEF...

- The animated "X-Men" series premieres on Fox in a "sneak preview" after many delays.
- Horror-maestro Clive Barker creates concepts for Marvel's "Razorline" imprint.
- Whilce Portacio's debut Image title *WetWorks* is scheduled to ship...but never does.
- Marvel releases *Ravage 2099* #1, Stan "the Man" Lee's return to monthly comics scripting!

NOVEMBER 1992

Doomsday For the Man of Steel

In *Superman* #75, writer/penciler Dan Jurgens tells the Man of Steel's final battle against the indestructible Doomsday. Released in a regular newsstand edition, as well as a polybagged edition complete with a black arm-band to mourn the Man of Steel, *Superman* #75 sets new sales records as fans and non-collectors alike line up in droves to purchase the landmark issue, which garners Superman and DC media-wide coverage. Reactions to Superman's death are varied, with some wondering if it's just a hoax. All of the Superman titles continue, though, with no heroic return in sight.

IN BRIEF...

- Malibu Graphics, publisher of Image titles, merges with game manufacturer Acme Interactive to form Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.
- Dale Keown's *Pitt* series debuts.
- Bill Clinton is elected U.S. President just in time to read a copy of Valiant's first partial-chromium cover with *Bloodshot* #1. And let the cover gimmick wars begin!

Lois and the world mourn the fall of Superman

1993

The Big Shots

HOT WRITERS: Neil Gaiman, Peter David, Fabian Nicieza, William Messner-Loebs, Jim Shooter

Dan Jurgens

Chuck Dixon

Matt Wagner

Brandon Choi

Frank Miller

HOT ARTISTS: Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Marc Silvestri, Erik Larsen

Joe Quesada

Mark Texeira

Mark Bagley

Bart Sears

Sam Kieth

ON THE RISE:

Stephen Platt

Jim Balent

Mike Allred

Greg Capullo

Jeff Smith

HOT TITLES: Batman titles, Superman titles, X-Men titles, *Spawn*, *WildC.A.T.s*, *Daredevil*, *Moon Knight*, *Ninjak*, *Prime*

HOTTEST MEAL TICKET: Hero make-overs, resurrections and replacements (i.e. Superman, Batman, Green Lantern, Daredevil)

TOP-GROSSING FILM: "Jurassic Park" ($337.8 million)
BEST PICTURE: "Schindler's List"
AMERICA WAS WATCHING: "Seinfeld," "Home Improvement"
AMERICA WAS LISTENING TO: Whitney Houston, Pearl Jam
AMERICA WAS READING: *The Bridges of Madison County* by Robert James Waller
POP CULTURE TREND: Saying "No way," followed by "Way" from "Wayne's World"

JANUARY 1993

Image Goes its Own Way

In an effort to gain total control of their comics, the founders of Image Comics kick off the New Year by announcing that they are leaving publisher Malibu to publish on their own. The move is met with both industry cynicism and praise; the backlash comes from the chronic lateness of their books potentially becoming an every-month thing, while the positives come from those rallying around their commitment to stand on their own two legs. The fans don't care, as long as they get their comics.

IN BRIEF...

- *Darker Image* debuts from Image Comics, featuring the first appearances of Rob Liefeld's Bloodwulf, Jim Lee's Deathblow and Sam Kieth's The Maxx.
- In the first official *Sandman* spin-off, Morpheus' sister gets her own mini-series with *Death: The High Cost of Living* #1 by Neil Gaiman and Chris Bachalo.

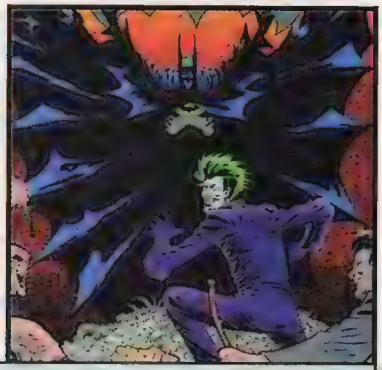
Death becomes popular (the character anyway)

- Neil Gaiman also writes *Spawn* #9 this month, featuring the first-appearance of Angela.
- The Dallas Cowboys stomp the Bills, 52-17, in Super Bowl XXVII as *Superman* #75 conquers the Top 10 hottest comics in the country.

FEBRUARY 1993

Batman Faces Death in 'Knightfall'

While DC readers are still reeling from the death of their beloved Superman, DC begins what is rumored to be the Death of Batman in "Knightfall," beginning in *Batman* #491. Building since last December's *Vengeance of Bane* one-shot, "Knightfall" has Batman face his most physically challenging foe in the drug-enhanced Bane. As Bane releases the maniacal inmates of Arkham Asylum, Batman is forced on a long journey into Gotham's underworld to capture the murderous villains, including Joker, Killer Croc and Two-Face.

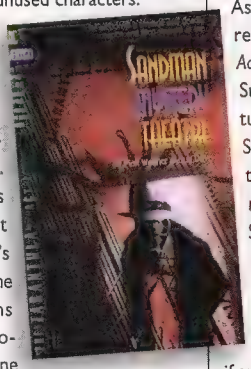


SOUND BITES — the best quotes of the last 5 years...

"MY FEELING IS THE SAME FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA AS IT IS FOR [DC COMICS'] FLASH: IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT."
—*Mark Waid (Wizard #45, May 1995)*

IN BRIEF...

- Comics guru Jack Kirby signs with Topps Comics, granting the fledging comic publisher exclusive rights to his unused characters.
- Vertigo brings the Golden Age Sandman to a whole new audience with Matt Wagner and Guy Davis' *Sandman Mystery Theatre* #1.
- As the nation is stunned by a terrorist bombing in New York's World Trade Center, the comics world mourns Harvey Kurtzman, co-founder of *Mad* magazine and writer/artist for EC Comics.



MARCH 1993

Brandon Lee Dies on the Set of 'The Crow'

In a freak accident, martial arts star Brandon Lee, son of the legendary Bruce Lee, is shot and killed March 31 on the set of "The Crow," the film adaptation of James O'Barr's cult-favorite comic book series. Lee, 31, dies of a single gunshot wound from a prop pistol that should have been loaded with blanks. Using digital effects, filming is completed without Lee, and "The Crow" enjoys a fairly wide audience on both the big screen and subsequent video release, helped in no small way by a popular alternative rock soundtrack and the publicity raised by Lee's untimely passing.

IN BRIEF...

- Valiant and Image announce plans for their *Deathmate* crossover, consisting of six issues in total. A summer tour with Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld, Bob Layton and others will be used to promote the project.
- Still no *WetWorks*. But the first issue is reportedly almost done. Honest.
- Rob Liefeld hooks up with Steven Spielberg to turn Doom's IV, a Liefeld Fantastic Four-esque superteam, into a movie. A comic is due to precede any film plans.
- Speaking of the FF, the recently wrapped, low-budget "Fantastic Four" feature film goes into post-production.
- Cable gets his own ongoing series with the release of *Cable* #1 by Fabian Nicieza and Art Thibert.
- Celebrating their 30th anniversary in 1993, Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* also hits the landmark 300th issue!
- Sam Kieth's *The Maxx* #1 emerges from Image.
- Following the 1993 Toy Fair, Toy Biz announces its new additions to the popular X-Men line, including Cable, Bishop, Strong Guy, Maverick and Longshot.

A tragic accident kills actor Brandon Lee during the filming of "The Crow"

APRIL 1993

Reign of the Supermen

As comics fans wonder when Superman will return from the dead, DC Comics releases *Adventures of Superman* #500, the first monthly Superman book to restart after the titles' hiatus of three months. And guess what? No Superman to be found. Instead, the story continues into the next week where all four Superman titles ship concurrently introducing four Supermen—each issue with a "special collector's cover" carrying a higher price tag. The Super-contenders: the humanoid Eradicator, the young superclone Superboy, Steel and the Cyborg-Superman—but which one, if any, is the real deal?

IN BRIEF...

- Continuity Comics announces that Todd McFarlane's Spawn will appear in *Valeria the She-Bat* #3, shipping in July.
- Valiant's anticipated *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* #1 ships. The issue, penciled by Bart Sears, is supposed to be the first complete chromium cover, but settles for a partial one. The anticipation fizzles quickly.
- Marvel adds yet another X-title to the mutant stew by launching the quarterly *X-Men Unlimited* #1 with art by unlikely Vertigo artist Chris Bachalo.
- Jack Kirby's *Phantom Force* #1 debuts from Topps.
- Jim Lee's *Deathblow* #1 and Rob Liefeld's *Bloodstrike* #1 finally emerge from Image after numerous delays.

MAY 1993

Malibu Joins the Superhero Arena with Ultraverse

With the loss of Image Comics from its ranks, Malibu bounces back with its own superhero universe called "Ultraverse." And to keep its top-notch talent this time around, the publisher comes up with a new way of doing business: giving the creator more rights, while Malibu still retains ownership of characters. With characters created and designed by such comics vets as James Robinson, Steve Englehart, Dave Gibbons, Norm Breyfogle, Mike W. Barr and many others, Malibu promises more story-driven comics for readers tiring of Marvel, Image or DC. Readers are skeptical because they're not tiring of the Big Three.

IN BRIEF...

- Jim Shooter announces his latest comic book launch: Defiant Comics, with former Valiant cohorts David Lapham and Janet Jackson.
- Valiant releases *X-O Manowar* #0—finally with the first complete-chromium cover by Joe Quesada. Fans buy multiple copies and put 'em all in polybags to resell and make a buck a few months from now.
- Hart Fisher's Boneyard Press creates controversy with *Jeffrey Dahmer vs. Jesus Christ* #1. Our money's on the kid from Bethlehem.

JUNE 1993

Dark Horse Tosses Hat in Superhero Ring

Following Malibu's lead, Dark Horse cries, "Twelve books for 12 bucks!"—the tagline for Dark Horse's superhero universe debut with the weekly $1 apiece comic book mini-series. Released in weekly installments, each chapter in this multi-part epic is designed to introduce comics readers to the various cities and heroes of "Comics' Greatest World." The debuts include Ghost, X, Pit Bulls, Monster and Barb Wire, among others.

IN BRIEF...

- Owww! Bane breaks Batman's back in *Batman* #497. Azrael wears the cape and cowl two weeks later; it is unknown when (and if!) Bruce Wayne will return as the Dark Knight.

Bane does his chiropractic routine on Batman

- The Man Without Fear begins his "Fall from Grace" in *Daredevil* #319, which Marvel publicizes with DD getting a new costume, new identity and new status quo. Sales are brisk.
- To gain greater control of the action figures made of its characters, Marvel enters into a merger with Toy Biz.
- The *Deathmate Prologue* sets the stage for the blowout Image/Valiant crossover.
- Sabretooth gets his own mini-series with art by hot *Wolverine* artist Mark Texeira.
- Malibu's Ultraverse officially debuts with *Hardcase* #1, *Prime* #1 and *The Strangers* #1.
- As Lorena Bobbitt "operates" on husband John Wayne Bobbitt's penis, DC's resident femme fatale Catwoman gets her own series with *Catwoman* #1. Budding artist Jim Balent gets the nod as penciler.
- Erik Larsen's *Savage Dragon* returns from Image with a new ongoing series.

JULY 1993

Spawn/Batman Team-Up Announced

Riding the popularity wave of "Knightfall," Todd McFarlane and DC Comics announce a crossover between the Dark Knight and Spawn in an eagerly awaited one-shot or mini-series sometime in the future. Not many details are revealed, as both companies are still sorting it all out. "There will be a lot of capes," jokes DC's Manager of Marketing Communications Patricia Jeres. But fans know she's not kidding.

IN BRIEF...

- Magneto returns to beset the X-Men in *Uncanny X-Men* #304, continuing the 30th anniversary of Marvel's popular mutant team with "Fatal Attractions."
- Valiant releases its end of the *Deathmate* bargain, while the Image half is noticeably late with assurances they'll be shipping soon.
- The Spawn appearance in *Valeria the She-Bat* #3 is axed because Todd McFarlane is reluctant to overexpose his character in light of the Batman crossover.

AUGUST 1993

Image Axes Titles

Expanding its line-up like crazy in recent months, Image Comics gives the ax to all titles currently produced by non-founding members (with the baffling exceptions of Sam Kieth's *Maxx* and Dale Keown's *Pitt*). On the chopping block are Mike Grell's *Shaman's Tears*, Keith Giffen's *Trencher*, *Tribe* by Todd Johnson and Larry Stroman, the Spawn-spoofing *Stupid* and Al Gordon and Jerry Ordway's *WildStar*. Citing an effort to dispel its "image" of perpetually shipping titles late, as well as a desire to nix any works that did not fit its vision of superheroes, Image gives the creators their walking papers to seek another publisher.

Dark Horse bulks up its product line in 1993 with the release of *Comics' Greatest World* over the summer (at left), and the formation of Legend (at right)

SOUND BITES

"TO BECOME A SELF-PUBLISHER IS INSANE. YOU HAVE TO BE OUT OF YOUR MIND."
—*Chaos Comics' Brian Pulido, self-publisher (Wizard #46, June 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

IN BRIEF...

- In *Batman* #500, replacement Dark Knight Jean Paul Valley dons his replacement duds for the first time, giving "grim and gritty" a whole new definition as "KnightQuest" begins!
- In *Superman* #82, the one true Man of Steel is revealed...Kal-El returns as Superman!
- DC and Image announce that each will publish an issue of the Spawn/Batman crossover; McFarlane says he will draw his half, whetting fans' appetites even more.
- Owwwww! In *X-Men* #25, Magneto rips the adamantium outta Wolverine's skeleton!
- *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* #1 reunites Frank Miller with his old pal Matt Murdock.
- Valiant introduces "Valiant Vision," a technology to make comics appear in 3-D, with an introductory comic. The glasses make reds and yellows pop into the foreground, while blues and violets recede to the background.

Valiant Vision specs

- Originally advertised as *Gen X* (but altered because of Marvel's impending *Generation X*), Jim Lee's *Gen13* #1 is scheduled to premiere from the Image camp but is delayed for unknown reasons.
- Raising awareness of the floundering *Fantastic Four*, Mr. Fantastic and Dr. Doom are incinerated in issue #381.
- Hey, is that Todd McFarlane drawing *Moon Knight* #55? No, his name is Stephen Platt and the issue sells out instantly. Platt's name sorta resonates through fandom.

SEPTEMBER 1993

Miller and Byrne Form 'Legend'

John Byrne and Frank Miller announce they are forming an imprint called "Legend," starting at Dark Horse Comics. The imprint also features Mike Mignola, Art Adams, Geof Darrow, Dave Gibbons and Paul Chadwick. Legend is touted as a "floating imprint," which could conceivably go to any company—not merely Dark Horse. Although, compared to Image Comics, the Legend founders stress that their intent is to create "a quality line of books" rather than their own company.

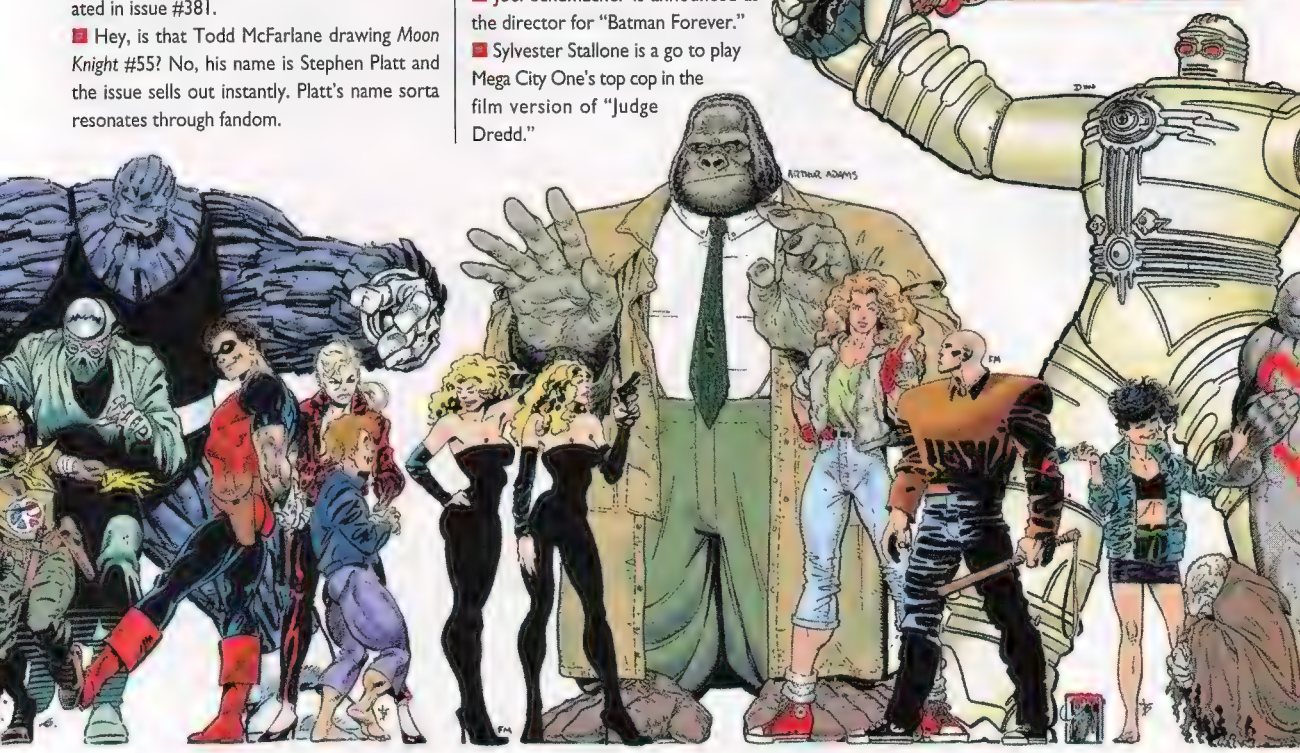
IN BRIEF...

- Rob Liefeld announces that he's taking an eight- or nine-month sabbatical from Image to work on his writing and artwork.
- Three months before the start of *Sandman*'s final major story arc "The Kindly Ones," rumors circulate that the story's climax will not only kill series star Morpheus, but his replacement will be the child Daniel Hall. Writer Neil Gaiman will only say that the ending "will be a tragedy, but an upbeat tragedy."
- Malibu reveals formation of its own creator-owned comics imprint to include works by such comics heavy-hitters as Jim Starlin, Howard Chaykin, Walt Simonson, Steven Grant, Gil Kane and others. Its name, however, is pending further announcement.
- After three popular mini-series, Boy Wonder Tim Drake finally gets his own ongoing series with *Robin* #1.
- Joel Schumacher is announced as the director for "Batman Forever."
- Sylvester Stallone is a go to play Mega City One's top cop in the film version of "Judge Dredd."
- Where oh where is *WetWorks*? Comics fans call out an APB on Whilce Portacio, while the simmering creator sinks into obscurity.

NOVEMBER 1993

Marvels Gives New Life to the Marvel Universe

November's big release is the surprising *Marvels* #1 which seems to come out of nowhere. The mini-series is Marvel Comics' homage to the early days of its most popular heroes. Written by Kurt Busiek and painted by rookie Alex Ross, *Marvels* relives Marvel's classic Lee/Kirby/Ditko days. While not merely a superhero adventure tale, the appeal of *Marvels* comes from its narrative approach: The story is told through the eyes of



photographer Phil Sheldon, giving an "everyman" perspective of the awe that superheroes inspire. *Marvels*' popularity is also surprising because of the hefty $5.95 price tag due to its acetate cover—the first use of this cover technology.

IN BRIEF...

- Todd McFarlane announces at Philadelphia's Comicfest that Frank Miller will return to Batman for the first time since "Batman: Year One," by writing the Image half of *Spawn/Batman*.
- "Penthouse Comix," featuring Adam Hughes on "Young Captain Adventure," premieres in the pages of *Penthouse* magazine.
- Rob Liefeld's *Deathmate Red* finally ships after five months of delays.
- Malibu names its creator-owned imprint "Bravura." It's either "Legend" or "Image" in Latin.
- *Ninjak* #1 is released from Valiant, featuring the smokin' Joe Quesada!
- *Simpsons Comics* #1 emerges from Bongo.
- Fandom is still awaiting Art Thibert's *Nightwing* mini-series.

DECEMBER 1993

'The Kindly Ones' Brings Death to Sandman

Although writer Neil Gaiman had promised from issue #1 that *Sandman* was a "finite" ongoing series—with an eventual end of the stories he had planned to tell—December sees the release of *Sandman* #57, part one of "The Kindly Ones," the final major storyline of DC's award-winning and mega-popular Vertigo title.

Illustrated by Marc Hempel, "The Kindly Ones" begins a tale said to involve practically every major character that has appeared in *Sandman*, as Lyta Hall seeks revenge against Morpheus for the supposed death of her infant son Daniel. Rumors persist that Morpheus will indeed perish, though none of the creators will admit to such.

IN BRIEF...

- In *Green Lantern* #48 and #49, GL Hal Jordan goes rogue in "Emerald Twilight," killing virtually the entire Green Lantern Corps in an attempt to rebuild his destroyed Coast City.
- Marvel's *Daredevil* #325 caps off "Fall from Grace" with a new costume and identity for the Man Without Fear.
- Also at DC, the former supermen get their own ongoing series in *Superboy* #1 and *Steel* #1. Heck, even Supergirl lifts off with the first issue of a four-part mini-series.

1994

The Big Shots

HOT WRITERS: Frank Miller, Neil Gaiman, Dan Jurgens, Brandon Choi

Ron Marz

Scott Lobdell

Jeff Smith

Peter David

Fabian Nicieza

HOT ARTISTS: Todd McFarlane, Joe Quesada, Frank Miller, Marc Silvestri, Jeff Smith

Stephen Platt

Greg Capullo

Bart Sears

John Romita Jr.

Andy Kubert

ON THE RISE:

J. Scott Campbell

Billy Tucci

Chris Bachalo

Joe Madureira

Mike Deodato Jr.

HOT TITLES: *Spawn, X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Wolverine*, DC's "Zero" issues, *Gen13, Prophet, Lady Death, Shi, Vampirella*

HOTTEST MEAL TICKET: Crossovers and mutants

TOP-GROSSING FILM: "Forrest Gump" ($292.7 million)
BEST PICTURE: "Forrest Gump"
AMERICA WAS WATCHING: "Melrose Place," "NYPD Blue," "Friends," "ER"
AMERICA WAS LISTENING TO: Boyz II Men, Sheryl Crow, Green Day, Stone Temple Pilots
AMERICA WAS READING: *The Bridges of Madison County* by Robert James Waller
POP CULTURE TREND: "Stupid is as stupid does": Forrest Gumpisms pervade Americana

JANUARY 1994

Happy Beginnings For the X-Men

Just as the market starts cooling off for the winter after the ridiculous summer glut, the X-Men invite fans to a gala wedding in *X-Men* #30. This issue features the anxiously awaited marriage of Marvel's most-star-crossed mutant couple, Scott Summers and Jean Grey! In their 30 years together, the two have endured extreme hardships as X-Men, most notably the death of Jean as Phoenix, and Scott's marriage to Goblin Queen (and Jean-clone) Madeline Pryor. In addition to the wedding, this issue also spotlights Wolverine's exit from the X-Men.

SOUND BITES

"I CONSIDER 'STYLE' TO BE WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO DO IT PERFECTLY."
—*Neal Adams (Wizard #46, June 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

IN BRIEF...

- In the wake of his November announcement that he will pencil Marvel's *Cable*, rising star Stephen Platt abandons Marvel to pencil, ink and co-plot Rob Liefeld's *Prophet*.
- As Buffalo loses a fourth straight time in Super Bowl XXVIII, Kenner announces an action figure assortment based on the animated "Batman: Mask of the Phantasm" film.
- As Southern California gets rocked by a major earthquake, Hal Jordan's world is shaken as he goes off into space in *Green Lantern* #50's conclusion of "Emerald Twilight." Meanwhile, Kyle Rayner is introduced as the new GL, much to fans' chagrin.
- Lady Death gets her own mini-series with *Lady Death* #1 from Chaos! Comics with a sharp-lookin' chromium cover. Too bad there aren't enough copies around to please the fans, making this a most-desirable book.

FEBRUARY 1994

The King is Dead

As comic sales further plummet, the industry suffers another blow when comic book legend Jack Kirby passes away on February 6th. Kirby's death closes the door on an expansive career that touched the comic book industry in more ways than can easily be counted. Jack "King" Kirby began his career during comics' Golden Age, co-creating Marvel's Captain America and DC's Boy Commandos, among many others, with collaborator Joe Simon. Kirby was at the forefront during the 1960s, teaming with Stan Lee to create the Fantastic Four, X-Men, Thor, the Avengers and many other enduring characters. Kirby's most-recent work involved creations produced through Topps Comics. At 86, after creating so many memories and forging comics' future, Kirby leaves a saddened industry very much indebted to him.

IN BRIEF...

- Rumors abound that Defiant's Jim Shooter will write Rob Liefeld's *Youngblood* late in 1994.
- Kenner's new Batman: The Animated Series toy line includes the standard Batman-variants we've grown to loathe: Mr. Freeze, as well as the first-ever Poison Ivy, Clayface and Killer Croc figures.
- Five months late, *Gen13* #1 finally ships for fans who say it's worth the wait. (*WetWorks*, however, is lost at sea.)
- As Tonya Harding gets grilled by America at the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, France, graphic artist Kyle Rayner gets crucified by longtime Green Lantern fans in his initial outing as the new GL in *Green Lantern* #51. Newer fans still say, "Green who?"
- Joe Quesada departs Valiant and *Ninjak* after three issues over creative differences, while *Ninjak* #1 is the hottest back issue in the land.

MARCH 1994

Batman/Spawn on the Prowl

As promised, the Batman/Spawn team-up finally hits the stands in two different works. DC Comics releases *Batman/Spawn: War Devil*, a tale co-written by Bat-scribes Chuck Dixon, Alan Grant and Doug Moench, with art by Klaus Janson. A few weeks later the Image side ships in *Spawn/Batman: Red Scare*, written by Frank Miller and drawn by Todd McFarlane. Sales are brisk, but not what they would've been eight months previous.

IN BRIEF...

- It's official...Jim Shooter says he's agreed to write *Youngblood* sometime later in the year.
- The embarrassingly low-budget "Fantastic Four" film is shelved, which in Hollywood lingo means "dead." (Hey, we saw a bootleg. It really, really sucked!)
- Toy Biz announces the release of 50 new Marvel figures, including an all-new Spider-Man line. Carnage, Doc Ock and the new ball-jointed Spidey figures show promise for the new line.
- Stephen Platt's first interior *Prophet* work appears in issue #5 after doing a variant cover to issue #4 last month.

APRIL 1994

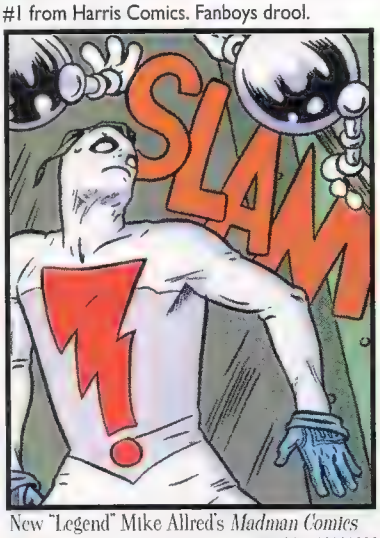
Shi Has What it Takes

Janitor Billy Tucci puts his life savings on the line to produce his own comic book called *Shi*. While not many of the first issue are ordered, word of mouth with fans is good enough for an instant sell-out. Tucci's clean style and the cool look of his female lead make this book a surprise success story—and all this despite the unreadable logo.

Billy Tucci's *Shi* is 1994's surprise hit

IN BRIEF...

- The much-anticipated rematch between the Man of Steel and Doomsday begins in *Superman/Doomsday: Hunter/Prey* #1.
- Marvel and DC announce plans for the Punisher and Batman to team up in the first Marvel/DC crossover in 12 years.
- Classic Warren Bad Girl Vampirella gets another ongoing series in *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1 from Harris Comics. Fanboys drool.



New "Legend" Mike Allred's *Madman Comics*

- Acclaim Entertainment enters into an agreement to buy Voyager Communications Inc., publisher of Valiant Comics.
- Kenner reveals its awful new Batman toy line: Legends of Batman, which features "Elseworlds" versions of the Dark Knight.
- In *Incredible Hulk* #418, Marvel's resident sidekick Rick Jones ties the knot with girlfriend Marlo.
- Mike Allred's Madman returns in Dark Horse's new *Madman Comics* #1, as Allred is named the eighth member of Legend.
- "Excelsior!" Chairman of Marvel Comics and Films Stan Lee signs a lifetime contract with Marvel.
- Keith Giffen and Charles Adlard resurrect *Mars Attacks!* in a new mini-series from Topps.

MAY 1994

Zero Hour to Fix Up Messy Continuity

Realizing its continuity is a big mess, DC announces that Dan Jurgens has been tapped as the man to fix the convoluted history of its universe by producing *Zero Hour: A Crisis in Time* starting this summer. *Zero Hour*'s premise is that the events from 1986's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* maxi-series never really ended and the time contin-

uum of the DC Universe is continuing to disintegrate. Now the heroes must find a way to repair the damage. The mini-series is said to lead into "Zero Month" (August) as every DC Universe title will ship as a #0 issue and act as a jumping-on point for new readers.

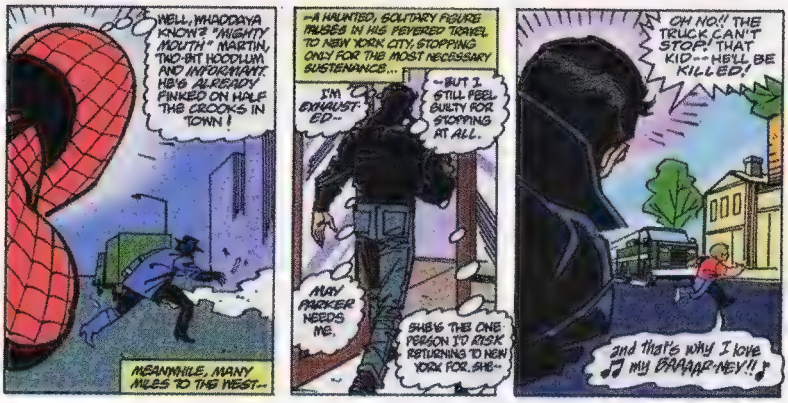
IN BRIEF...

- *Action Comics* celebrates its 700th issue by kicking off the five-part "Fall of Metropolis" storyline.
- "The Crow" flies into theaters and is met with a round of applause.
- In *The Flash* #92, Impulse races to his first appearance.
- *The Lady Death Swimsuit Special* #1 debuts. Two of the more impressive things in comics this month.

Lady Death shares her wares in her first Swimsuit Special. Yowza!

Fans slowly warm up to the new GL

- *Green Lantern* #54 ships. Newer fans start to take notice that this new guy as GL could be pretty cool. They would also be right.
- *Batman* #509 kicks off part one of "KnightsEnd" as Bruce Wayne must win back the mantle of the Bat.
- As Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley shock America by getting hitched, "Star Trek: The Next Generation" ends its seven-year run as the Enterprise crew heads for the big screen.



Spidey falls victim to the lamest Marvel storyline in a long time

JUNE 1994

Ugh! Spider-Clone Re-Introduced

"We're not killing Peter Parker," Marvel spokesperson Gary Guzzo says in response to the speculation of Spider-Man's demise, "but he's gonna wish we had." And he isn't kidding. Rumors also run rampant that the Spider-Man clone—last seen dead in *Amazing Spider-Man* #151 (1975)—is slated to return. And return he does 19 years later in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #215, featuring a cameo appearance of a mysterious figure, who turns out to be the Spider-Clone miraculously alive. And worse than that, rumors are also circulating that Marvel will eventually reveal that the clone is really the one true Spider-Man. Fans are stunned, to say the least, but not before going, "Ugggh."

IN BRIEF...

- Rob Liefeld ends his nine-month "sabbatical" with the release of *Youngblood* #6. (Liefeld even proposes marriage to girlfriend Beth Creel in the final three pages of the book. She says yes.)
- O.J. Simpson takes his wild Bronco ride as *Aquaman* #1 reunites writer Peter David with DC's resident King of the Sea.
- In *Robin* #8, Bruce Wayne returns as Batman after stripping the mantle from Jean Paul Valley in *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #63.
- Neal Pozner, group editor for creative services for DC Comics, dies of AIDS-related illnesses at age 38—June 21.

JULY 1994

WetWorks Ships...And Yes, Hell Freezes Over

Originally set to premiere in October 1992, Whilce Portacio's much-delayed *WetWorks* #1 finally appears. Now published by Jim Lee's studio, Portacio says he had been forced to shelve his work in order to deal with personal problems. But two years of delays took its toll on the book, taking the wind out of *WetWorks*' sales. Clearly if it had shipped on time, it would've done much better than the somewhat marginal sales it now receives in an extremely unstable market.

IN BRIEF...

- After months of hype, *Zero Hour* #4 kicks off the continuity-altering mini-series by Dan Jurgens, counting down to issue #3, #2, #1 and #0 on a weekly basis.
- Peter Parker finally catches up with the Spider-Clone in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #216. Fans groan louder.
- Keaton is out, Kilmer is in! Warner Bros. announces that Val Kilmer is the new Bat-actor in town to take over the title role in "Batman Forever," the third Bat-flick.
- It's official! Acclaim becomes owner of Valiant Comics, subsequently becoming Acclaim Comics.
- "The Phalanx Covenant" begins in *Uncanny X-Men* #316, leading to the formation of Generation X!
- Scientists and the public are amazed as a comet strikes Jupiter, while *Supreme* #12, boasting a cover by white-hot Stephen Platt, is tops in back-issues.
- As Marvel enters into an agreement to publish Harvey Comics characters, the industry mourns the passing of Harvey Comics founder Alfred Harvey.
- Audiences wonder if it's ILM or pure nature when Jim Carrey contorts his face in "The Mask."

"The Mask" catapults Jim Carrey to superstardom

"EVERYTHING THAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD, AND EVERYTHING THAT'S WRONG WITH THE INDUSTRY, CAN BE DISTILLED DOWN TO HAVING NO SENSE OF HISTORY."
—*John Byrne, historian (Wizard #47, July 1995)*
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

AUGUST 1994

Image Announces X-Month

The big news in August is the planned "swapping" of titles by Image's founding fathers in September called X-Month—though no one is saying who is doing what, driving fans up the wall. Whether tired of their own work, or simply in the mood to shake up the status quo, the six creators are hard at work on each others' titles.

IN BRIEF...

- *WetWorks* #2 ships on time. The blind see. Fanboys bathe.
- Marvel names former-Kenner guru Bruce Stein its President, Chief Operating Officer, Director.
- Image releases *Gen13* #0...while *Gen13* #1 is the leading back issue.
- Marc Silvestri announces he'll leave Homage Studios, shared with Jim Lee, to focus more closely on his own Top Cow Productions.
- Rob Liefeld lets Todd McFarlane make Chapel and Badrock into action figures...but they still can't play well together.
- Aquaman trades in his left hand for a harpoon beginning with *Aquaman* #2.
- Everything old is new again as Legion of Super-Heroes history begins anew with *Legion of Super-Heroes* #0.
- As Woodstock '94 gives a whole new generation a muddy good time, Kyle Rayner takes on Hal Jordan with Oa as the battlefield in *Green Lantern* #0.
- As of August 31st, Defiant is no more. Jim Shooter's latest comics venture folds like a cheap lawn chair.

SEPTEMBER 1994

Marvel's *Generation X* is Launched

Adding a staggering twelfth title to its roster of mutant titles, Marvel premieres the first issue of *Generation X*, the newest team of teen mutants. Heirs to the legacy inspired by the X-Men, Generation X features an odd mix of mutants under the tutelage of White Queen and former X-Man, Banshee. Husk, Synch, M, Mondo, Chamber, Skin and Penance join together with noted Wolverine-pal Jubilee to hearken a new age of mutant adventures from X-scribe Scott Lobdell and rising-star Chris Bachalo.

IN BRIEF...

- Marvel rumored to be canceling its X-titles. Fans laugh at the ludicrous notion.
- Image's X-month begins...while *WetWorks* #3 ships on time for a third straight month!
- Jim Lee announces a sabbatical from Image to devote time to his family—just in time for the "WildC.A.T.s" cartoon premiere on CBS.

The "Age of Apocalypse" shakes things up

OCTOBER 1994

DeFalco Out, Five Others In

With sales of Marvel books on the decline, Tom DeFalco is ousted as the publisher's editor-in-chief. Instead of replacing him, Marvel announces it will distribute the job to create five editors-in-chief, each with their own corner of the Marvel publishing family to oversee. The five named are Bob Budiansky (Spider-Man titles), Bobbie Chase (Marvel Edge titles), Mark Gruenwald (Marvel Heroes titles), Bob Harras (X-Men titles) and Carl Potts (licensed titles).

IN BRIEF...

- "What are they *thinking*???" That's what fans cry when sources at Marvel reveal that not only are the X-titles getting canceled, but some or all of the mutants populating the books will get killed!
- Rumors circulate that Marvel will be purchasing Malibu Comics after DC Comics reportedly bowed out of the running a month ago; an announcement is expected shortly.
- Image Comics co-founder Rob Liefeld creates an independent publishing house called Maximum Press, with rumors swirling about him leaving Image.
- Toy Biz unveils its new Fantastic Four and Iron Man action figure lines.
- Jonny Quest creator Doug Wildey passes away—October 5.

DECEMBER 1994

'Age of Apocalypse' Rocks X-World

Beginning with *X-Men: Alpha* #1, Marvel shakes up its mutant universe by launching "Age of Apocalypse," a storyline where Legion, son of Professor X, attempts to right the present-day world by killing Magneto in the past. But when Professor X is killed instead, present day reality is radically altered. Enough to effectively cancel all the X-titles to be replaced with all new series starting over with #1. The changes are as follows: *Cable* becomes *X-Man*, *Excalibur* becomes *X-Calibre*, *Generation X* becomes *Generation Next*, *Uncanny X-Men* becomes *Astonishing X-Men*, *Wolverine* becomes *Weapon X*, *X-Factor* becomes *Factor X*, *X-Force* becomes *Gambit and the X-Ternals*, *X-Men* becomes *The Amazing X-Men* and *X-Men Unlimited* becomes *X-Men Chronicles*.

IN BRIEF...

- After announcing it has purchased Malibu Comics in November, Marvel shocks the industry by announcing that it is purchasing a small distributor called Heroes World. It is unknown, but widely speculated, that the publisher would distribute its own comics exclusively through Heroes World, unhinging the current balance of comic book distribution. Marvel, currently under contract to distribute its books through Diamond Distributors and Capital City Distribution, is expected to make its announcement soon.
- Bruce Stein resigns as Marvel president over "philosophical differences."
- Marvel acquires Welsh Publishing Group, a children's magazine publisher, adding it to the mighty Marvel empire.
- Wolverine returns to the X-Men in the pages of *Wolverine* #90.
- Spawn Bad Girl Angela spins off into her own mini-series from Image, teaming Neil Gaiman and Greg Capullo.
- Former-Batman Jean Paul Valley is awarded his own DC series with *Azrael* #1.
- Once again, Image's *Gen13* #1 is at the top of the back-issue heap.

1995 The Big Shots

HOT WRITERS: Peter David, Ron Marz, Scott Lobdell, Brandon Choi, Fabian Nicieza

Kurt Busiek

Alan Moore

Mark Waid

Chuck Dixon

Neil Gaiman

HOT ARTISTS: Todd McFarlane, Joe Quesada, Jim Lee, Greg Capullo, Andy Kubert

Billy Tucci

J. Scott Campbell

Joe Madureira

Steven Hughes

Adam Kubert

ON THE RISE:

Ron Garney

Humberto Ramos

Trent Kaniuga

Garth Ennis

Warren Ellis

HOT TITLES: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Wolverine, Generation X, X-Factor, Cable, Spawn, Lady Death, Shi, Angela, Azrael, Gen13, Sovereign Seven*

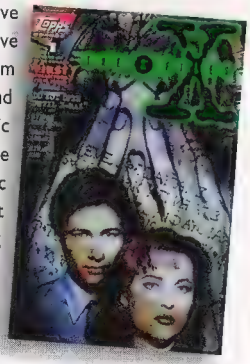
HOTTEST MEAL TICKET: Bad Girls—Big Boobs mean Big Bucks!

TOP-GROSSING FILM: "Batman Forever" ($292.7 million)
BEST PICTURE: "Braveheart"
AMERICA WAS WATCHING: "X-Files," "Friends," "ER"
AMERICA WAS LISTENING TO: Live, Hootie and the Blowfish, Dave Matthews Band
AMERICA WAS READING: *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield
POP CULTURE TREND: Jennifer Anistons 'do as seen on "Friends"

JANUARY 1995

X-Files Becomes Sleeper Hit

No one paid much attention when Topps got the license to produce an X-Files comic book series. But when the "X-Files" TV show wins a Golden Globe award for best drama, the barely ordered *X-Files* #1 is an instant sell-out, quickly soaring to everyone's must-have list. Despite a relative unknown creative team of Stefan Petrucha and Charles Adlard, comic fans and fans of the show flock to comic stores to find it—but not many do, adding to its desirability.



IN BRIEF...

- As prosecutors give their opening statements to the O.J. Simpson trial, all the "Age of Apocalypse" books sell like gangbusters.
- D'oh! Steve and Cindy Vance depart their positions as editors-in-chief of Matt Groening's Bongo Comics. (Maybe they were upset about the San Diego Chargers' loss to the 49ers in Super Bowl XXIX.)
- Finally! *Lady Death #1* unseats *Gen13* #1 to become this month's hottest back issue.

MARCH 1995

Gen13 Gives Variant a New Name

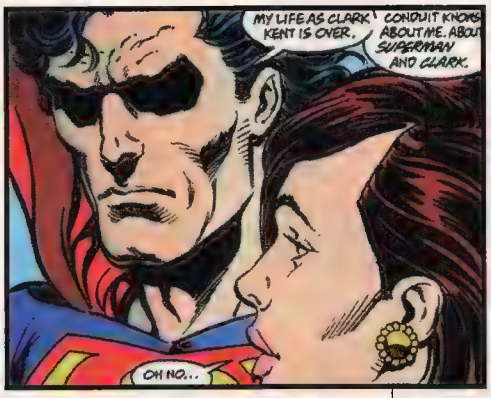
Gen13 #1 blitzes buyers in March, sporting 13 different covers for the title's ongoing launch. Fans delight at the ingenuity of each cover. Besides two standard J. Scott Campbell covers, one cover pays homage to Victoria's Secret, while another apes the Janet Jackson *Rolling Stone* cover. Yet another depicts a take-off of the movie poster for "Pulp Fiction." And there are spoofs on *Spider-Man* #1, the X-Babies, DC's Sandman, *Heavy Metal* magazine, TV's "The Brady Bunch," a cut-out paper doll cover, and a blank cover (for the budding artist!). Image immediately has a marketing bonanza on its hands, as each variant burns up the back-issue chart, and Gen13 once again becomes one of the hottest titles in the land!

IN BRIEF...

- Marvel reduces its editorial staff, streamlines its title line-up and formally announces that it will distribute its comics exclusively through Heroes World starting in July.
- As Michael Jordan returns to pro basketball after a 17-month hiatus, David Lapham forms his own company, El Capitán, to publish *Stray Bullets*.
- Fans balk as Acclaim Comics launches "Birthquake" with Bart Sears returning to *X-O Manowar*, and Dan Jurgens taking over *Solar, Man of the Atom*.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

SOUND BITES
"...I LIKE TO COVER UP MY FEMALE CHARACTERS AS A GENERAL RULE. I THINK THEY CAN LOOK JUST AS SEXY WHILE WEARING SOME CLOTHES."
—*Joe Madureira, bucking the trends (Wizard #47, July 1995)*
the best quotes of the last 5 years...



With the secret out, Superman kills Clark Kent

■ In *Superman* #100, the Man of Steel's alter-ego Clark Kent "dies"—a result of Conduit discovering he's Superman.

APRIL 1995

Marvel Implosion

The news of Marvel's increased down-downsizing becomes more apparent as many of its titles are removed from the company's publication schedule. Among the titles receiving the axe during this critical slump: *Darkhawk*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Marvel Comics Presents*, *Punisher*, *Punisher War Journal*, *Punisher War Zone*, *Savage Sword of Conan* and *Warlock and the Infinity Watch*. And correspondingly, many writers, editors and artists are out of jobs.

IN BRIEF...

■ As the baseball strike comes to a close after eight months, Marvel caps the "Age of Apocalypse" storyline with *X-Men: Omega*.

■ In response to Marvel's Heroes World purchase, Diamond Comics becomes the exclusive distributor of DC Comics direct market comic book releases.

■ She's nekkid! Lightning Comics' Hellina tops all ridiculous cover gimmicks by baring *all* on the nude cover of *Hellina: Taking Back the Night* #1.

MAY 1995

Spidey is a Fraud!

To many Spider-Man fans, *Spectacular Spider-Man* #226 is the last straw. It's in this very issue that fans are told the Peter Parker they've known and loved for years is actually the Spider-Clone and that his supposed clone Ben Reilly—who's been out of commission since 1975's Spider-books—is the real deal. Many feel cheated, many feel angry and many stop buying Spider-Man books altogether. Most Spidey fans are amazed that Marvel continued the clone story in the first place, despite the negative reaction fans had given it from almost a year previous. It's presently unknown how Marvel will deal with this tremendous backlash. But the Clone story rages on...

IN BRIEF...

■ Marvel releases *X-Men: Prime* #1, restoring the X-Universe to some sense of normalcy...but that remains to be seen. Two words: Dark Beast.

■ DC introduces Chris Claremont's creator-owned *Sovereign Seven*, a title fully integrated in DC Universe continuity.

■ Jim Valentino gets national coverage as ShadowHawk succumbs to complications from AIDS in *ShadowHawk* #18.

■ In Marvel's *X-Force* #44, Cannonball Sam Guthrie becomes the latest X-Man.

■ "The Kindly Ones" finally culminates in the death of Morpheus in *Sandman* #69. A transformed Daniel subsequently replaces him as Lord of Dreams.

Morpheus steps down and the final chapters of *The Sandman* come to an end

■ Clark Kent returns to life in *Adventures of Superman* #525.

■ *X-Men: Alpha* #1 makes it a mighty mutant month for back issues.

■ The film version of "Casper" is released.

■ The nation is stunned when "Superman" actor Christopher Reeve becomes paralyzed in a riding accident after being thrown from his horse during a riding competition.

JUNE 1995

Batman 'Forever' Bashes the Box Office

If fans thought "Batman Returns" had star power, "Batman Forever" buries it big-time, reviving the Bat-franchise. With Val Kilmer in the lead role following the departure of previous Bat-dude Michael Keaton, the flick also sports the debut of Chris O'Donnell as Robin, Jim Carrey as the Riddler, Tommy Lee Jones as Two-Face and Nicole

"Batman Forever" revives the Bat-franchise

Kidman as Dr. Chase Meridian. And the stars deliver. Setting the single-weekend record for grossing $53 million, moviegoers and comic fans cheer, despite the weak plot, nipples on the costumes and Batman revealing his identity *yet again*.

IN BRIEF...

■ Todd McFarlane's Spawn receives an updated look in *Spawn* #32.

■ Cannon's film version of "Judge Dredd" with Sylvester Stallone ("I am duh law!") is released to theaters. Moviegoers mow it down.

■ Alan Moore and Tony Daniel unite to send Todd McFarlane's Al Simmons into *Spawn: Blood Feud* #1.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

■ As actor Hugh Grant is arrested after being found with a prostitute in Hollywood, Joe Linsner's Dawn returns in a new series beginning with issue #1.

■ Marvel releases *Spider-Man: Maximum Clonage Alpha*. Die-hard Spidey fans have two words: Maximum Garbage.

■ The Top 10 back issues department becomes the Top 13 as every single variant issue of *Gen13* #1 occupies the countdown!

JULY 1995

Marvel/Heroes World Exclusivity Begins

No one knew what to expect. When Marvel announced its exclusive distribution pact with Heroes World in March, most of the competition thought it meant war. Most felt it would destroy the direct market. Most felt it was just plain bad for the industry. Well...that doesn't happen—but things don't go smoothly either. Instead, it seems like Marvel jumped the gun by a few months, as Heroes World is either unable to fulfill its orders to many retailers or is late in shipping its comics to them. But Marvel promises retailers that the glitches will be ironed out soon enough. Really.

IN BRIEF...

- Alan Moore returns to active comics duty as regular scripter of *WildC.A.T.s* beginning with issue #21.
- John Byrne takes on DC's *Wonder Woman* with #101 by tinkering with her costume and relocating her to Gateway City.
- Zorro's Bad Girl Lady Rawhide gets her own mini-series from Topps.
- Star Wars cult-favorite hero Wedge Antilles gets his own comic book series in Dark Horse's *Star Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron* #1.
- It took forever but DC's *Nightwing* mini-series debuts. (And Art Thibert has nothing to do with it.)
- In back issues, all those *Gen*^{13} #1's are out—Topps' *X-Files* #1 is back in the top spot.
- *Penthouse Comix* editor George Carragonne commits suicide—July 20.

AUGUST 1995

Marvel versus DC!

With a newfound *glasnost*, Marvel and DC announce their crossover plans for the winter and, no, it's not Spidey and Superman...it's both of their freakin' universes! Scheduled to begin in December, *Marvel versus DC* will be four issues—two published by DC written by Ron Marz, two by Marvel written by Peter David. The art will be shared by pencilers Dan Jurgens and Italian prodigy Claudio Castellini, and inkers Joe Rubinstein and Paul Neary. The crossover has a clincher: fans get to vote through balloting on five key battles, the results of which will appear in the third issue. The bouts are Lobo/Wolverine, Superman/Hulk, Wonder Woman/Storm, Batman/Captain America and Superboy/Spider-Man.

Fans never thought they'd see *this* scene

IN BRIEF...

- Mark Waid and Ron Garney team up on *Captain America* #444 to give the dusty patriot a make-over.
- Fans squirm as Peter Parker decides to let Ben Reilly be the Web-Head, relinquishing the role of Spider-Man in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #229.
- Rob Liefeld resurrects TV's "Battlestar Galactica" in a new comic book series.
- Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* debuts from Image with glowing reviews but low sales.
- Fabian Nicieza writes his last X-Men story in *X-Men* #45. In it, Rogue says farewell to Gambit and he cries in his gumbo.

NOVEMBER 1995

Jurgens Does Spidey

Numb from the past year's worth of Spider-stories, fans' interest is piqued as Dan Jurgens, the man who killed Superman, shifts over to Marvel this month with the release of *Sensational Spider-Man* #0, a new monthly title replacing *Web of Spider-Man*. Following the "Spider-Clone" saga, Jurgens picks up the ball by helping to develop new/old Spidey Ben Reilly, giving the character a new job, a new romantic interest, a new supporting cast and a new hair color—*blonde?!?*

IN BRIEF...

- DC and Dark Horse announce plans for a Batman/Aliens crossover by Ron Marz and Bernie Wrightson.
- Todd McFarlane is cornered by TV's "A Current Affair" for his treatment of satanism and racism in *Spawn*.
- Image co-founder Jim Valentino is named executive creative director of Rob Liefeld's Extreme Studios.
- Incidentally, *Lady Death* #1 wracks up the number one spot in hot back issues.
- *Cerebus* celebrates #200, spotlighting the two-thirds mark on Dave Sim's planned 300-issue run.
- Marvel makes nice with Rob Liefeld, who briefly returns to the fold to provide the artwork for the cover of *X-Force* #50.

Cerebus hits #200

- *Cybernary* artist Nick Manabat succumbs to lymphoma at age 23—November 5.

DECEMBER 1995

Lee and Liefeld Return to Marvel

Hell freezes over twice in two years! First *WetWorks* ships and now Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld announce they are returning to Marvel to creatively control two core Marvel titles apiece. Fans go spastic when they hear Lee will handle *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*, while Liefeld will take *Captain America* and *Avengers* in September. It is unknown what each creator plans to do with the characters—but fans just can't wait anyway.

IN BRIEF...

- *Marvel versus DC* #1 is a mega-success, selling out instantly and becoming the first sign of a rejuvenated market in almost two years.
- X-Woman Storm finally gets her own limited series from Marvel.
- *Logan* #1 explores the pre-adamantium days of the li'l guy.
- *X-Men Prime* #1 tops the list of hottest back issues.

SOUND BITES

"A NASTY SENSE OF HUMOR HELPS. LAUGHING AT THE AFFLICTED IS A GOOD ONE. A STRONG SENSE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE HELPS."

—*Garth Ennis on the ideal Vertigo writer (Wizard #47, July 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

1996 (so far) The Big Shots

HOT WRITERS: Peter David, Scott Lobdell, Mark Waid, Chuck Dixon, Kurt Busiek

Garth Ennis

Karl Kesel

James Robinson

Ron Marz

Neil Gaiman

HOT ARTISTS: Todd McFarlane, Joe Quesada, Billy Tucci, Greg Capullo, Joe Madureira

Alex Ross

Joe Linsner

Mike Wieringo

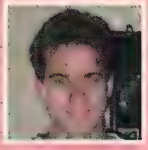
Jim Lee

J. Scott Campbell

ON THE RISE:

Tony Daniel

Pat Olliffe


Cary Nord

Ian Churchill

Amanda Conner

HOT TITLES: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Wolverine, Generation X, X-Factor, Cable, Spawn, Lady Death, Shi, Angela, Azrael, Gen^{13}, Sovereign Seven*

HOTTEST MEAL TICKET: Teen Heroes, Bad Girls...still, intra-company crossovers (a la Marvel/DC's Amalgam Comics)

TOP-GROSSING FILM: "Mission Impossible" (our best guess)
BEST PICTURE: Dunno—whaddayou think?
AMERICA WAS WATCHING: "X-Files," "Friends," "ER," "Third Rock From the Sun"
AMERICA WAS LISTENING TO: Alanis Morrisette, Oasis, Bush, Smashing Pumpkins
AMERICA WAS READING: *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield
POP CULTURE TREND: George Clooney's matted haircut seen on "ER"

JANUARY 1996

Jerry Siegel, Co-Creator of Superman, Passes Away

Fans lose another comics pioneer as Superman's co-creator/writer Jerry Siegel, dies on January 28. With childhood friend Joe Shuster, Siegel conceived comics' first true superhero in 1938 for the pages of *Action Comics* #1. Once again, fans are reminded of the great legacy Siegel has left and his contribution to the entire comic book medium will never be forgotten.

IN BRIEF...

- Bob Harras is named editor-in-chief of Marvel, as the publisher abandons its five editors-in-chief positions.
- *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #48 begins the 11-part "Contagion" storyline.
- As the Pittsburgh Steelers are trounced by the Cowboys in Super Bowl XXX, *Shi* #1 is the hottest back issue in the land.
- Inker Malcolm Jones III, a contributor to the early run of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* dies.
- Renowned Tarzan newspaper strip artist Burne Hogarth dies—January 28.

FEBRUARY 1996

'Batman and Robin'—Kilmer is Out, Clooney is In

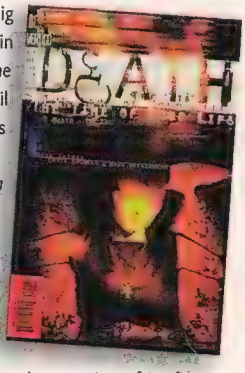
The rumors are confirmed! With Val Kilmer bowing out of the Bat-suit, Warner Bros. hires "ER" hunk George Clooney to portray the Dark Knight in "Batman and Robin," the studio's fourth installment in the Bat-franchise due out in summer 1997. Joining the cast are Arnold Schwarzenegger as the villainous Mr. Freeze and *überbabe* Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy. On the side of the dynamic duo, Alicia Silverstone is named as Batgirl, while Chris O'Donnell stays as Robin.

IN BRIEF...

- Marvel's "Generation X" airs on Fox, tying for 72nd place out of 108 Nielsen-rated programs.

Aaaah! Turn it off! Turn it off!

- After six months of gradual improvement, retailers become a slightly happier bunch as Heroes World starts to make good on its promise to fix its distribution problems.
- The Sandman's big sister Death returns in DC's *Death: The Time of Your Life* #1 by Neil Gaiman and Chris Bachalo.

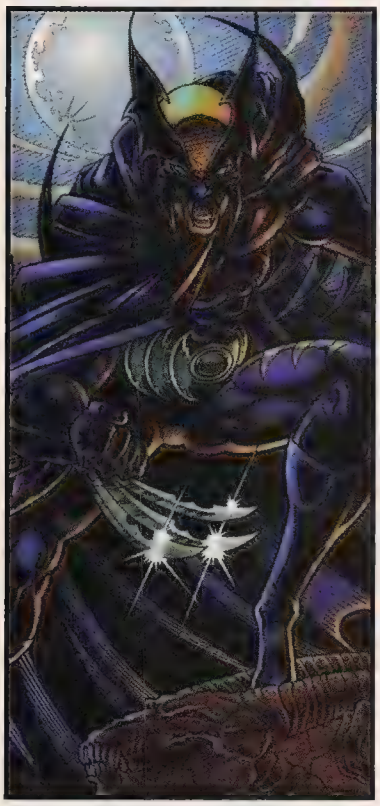


- *Captain America* celebrates its landmark 450th issue.
- Garth Ennis and John McCrea make a killing with DC's *Hitman* #1.
- Marvel announces the opening of its first theme restaurant, MarvelMania, to be opened at Universal Studios Florida in 1998.

MARCH 1996

Marvel/DC Combine to Create Amalgam

The big secret of the *Marvel versus DC* crossover is the combination of both universes at the end of *Marvel versus DC* #3 to create Amalgam Comics. This means interesting combinations with Marvel and DC heroes. With 12 books to its ranks (the only superhero books both publishers ship that week), the Amalgam titles feature art and stories from some of comics' top



Amalgam makes for strange bedfellows

creators. Among the more interesting "amalgamations": Super-Soldier (Superman/Captain America), Spider-Boy (Spider-Man/Superboy), Dark Claw (Wolverine/Batman) and Dr. Strangefate (Dr. Strange/Dr. Fate).

IN BRIEF...

- Dan Jurgens announces his departure from Marvel's *Sensational Spider-Man* with issue #6, due to editorial differences. He promptly begins work on a new *Teen Titans* series for DC.
- Neil Gaiman signs a $1 million deal with Avon Books to write three books. Gaiman plans to use the money to buy more black clothes.
- After many, many years, Marvel Comics reacquires the license to produce Star Trek comics for Paramount.
- 68-year-old Jack Abel, a veteran penciler, inker and production artist in the comics industry, dies of a heart attack at the offices of Marvel Comics.
- Mike Tyson wins the World Boxing Council Heavyweight crown once again as Topps' *The X-Files* #1 is tops in back issues.
- Reports of a "mad cow" disease threat initiate a severe slump in Britain's meat industry—and it's got nothing to do with the Skrull cows in *Skrull Kill Krew*.

APRIL 1996

Peter Parker to Return as Spider-Man

The fans speak out and Marvel finally listens. Citing fan disapproval of the current Spider-Man—the non-clone Ben Reilly who was resurrected in the Spider-Clone saga—Marvel Editor-in-Chief Bob Harras confirms that plans are in progress to restore the one true Peter Parker as comics' favorite wall-crawler. As the summer crossover "Onslaught" grips the Marvel Universe, Parker will return to the role for which comics fans have identified him...and him alone. Once again, comics fans have proven that *en masse*, they can be a force to be reckoned with.

IN BRIEF...

- Marvel and Image announce plans for a summer crossover with the following team-ups: Youngblood/X-Force, Badrock/Spider-Man, and Badrock/Wolverine.
- DC announces a planned Justice League of America re-launch with classic members Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Flash, Aquaman and Martian Manhunter.
- Walt Simonson and Gary Gianni become the latest members of Legend.
- Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* jumps from Image to Homage Comics, Jim Lee's new creator-owned imprint.
- *Vengeance of Vampirella* #25 ships, the final issue of the title.
- After seven years, Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* ends with issue #75, "The Tempest."
- DC's Dark Knight goes "acoustic" on *Batman: Black and White* #1, a four-issue mini-series featuring all black-and-white stories.
- As Madonna announces she's pregnant, the post-*Sandman* anthology *The Dreaming* premieres from DC/Vertigo.

MAY 1996

Thy Will Be Done in *Kingdom Come*

Touted as the next *Watchmen* or *Dark Knight Returns*, DC launches *Kingdom Come* by hot talents Mark Waid and Alex Ross—and the jury likes what it sees. The "Elseworlds" series features nearly every major DC icon in a future incarnation, as well as the progeny of those superheroes...some not as nice as their superparents. All-out war ensues as the DC Universe heads for the Apocalypse.

Superman's not in game-shape, but still kicks ass

IN BRIEF...

- Mark Waid announces he will be leaving *X-Men* after he finishes up the "Onslaught" crossover in August.
- Jim Lee not only announces an X-Men/WildC.A.T.s crossover for '97, but also his return as penciler to *WildC.A.T.s*.
- Former X-writer Fabian Nicieza is announced as new editor-in-chief of Acclaim Comics.

Thin plots don't make up for thin costumes

- "Baywatch" star Pamela Lee brings Dark Horse's Bad Girl to life with the film premiere of "Barb Wire." It rakes in a measly $1.83 million in its opening weekend, making it two of the biggest box-office busts of the year thus far.

Scott Beatty and the Wizard staff expect you to have read every single word in this feature. We did.

"I WAS WORKING ON "THE TICK" SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, AND I STARTED TO GO PRETTY INSANE. AFTER ABOUT THREE MONTHS I BECAME CONVINCED THAT EVERY TIME I FLUSHED THE TOILET, IT WAS SAYING, 'I LOVE YOU.'"
—*Ben Edlund, Tidy-Bowl Man* (Wizard #50, October 1995)
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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2001: A Comics Odyssey

WIZARD LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE AND PREDICTS THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Todd McFarlane is returning to Spider-Man. You can count on it. And that's not all.

Comic shops require proof-of-age identification. A cable channel dedicates 24 hours a day to comics programming.

Outrageous? Possibly. Far-fetched? Maybe.

But as *Wizard* examines the future of the comics industry, we see an influx of outside influences altering the business: technology changing the way books are completed, talent from other mediums and countries dictating styles and genres, even an increased government awareness which may necessitate a ratings system for comics.

One thing is guaranteed, the next five years of comics will be tumultuous.

TODD McFARLANE WILL DO SPIDER-MAN AGAIN.

"I really only scratched the surface of Spider-Man," said Todd McFarlane. "If they ever said, 'Todd, you can do Spider-Man and run wild with him,' I'd still make changes." And Marvel would welcome those changes. The company set a precedent earlier this year by farming out Marvel properties to Image co-founders (Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld's "Heroes Reborn" campaign, and crossover campaigns with the studios of Lee, Liefeld and Marc Silvestri). So it's only natural for Image's shining star to return to Spider-Man and perform his own version of "Unfinished Business." McFarlane's stint on Spidey during the early 1990s ranks among the best-selling Marvel books of all time.

A reunion would assure McFarlane a huge payday, potentially a six-figure sum for one book. As it stands now, McFarlane doesn't even pencil a book full-time, concentrating instead on his entrepreneurial duties—overseeing McFarlane Toys and the animated and live-action Spawn projects. As a man who began his career drawing comics, the lure of revamping one of the most enduring characters in comics will prove too enticing to McFarlane. It will also give him a

BY THE WIZARD STAFF

chance to get out from behind the desk and his role as a publisher and flex his artistic muscles. And while McFarlane's messy divorce from Marvel has been well-documented and he insisted he would never return, is that his final word on the subject? "Well, all right, never say never," admitted McFarlane. And Todd's return to Spider-Man will help trigger our next prediction.

IMAGE COMICS AS WE KNOW IT WILL BE NO MORE.

While Marvel Comics has unified the comic book industry with a variety of crossover and character deals, this has all served to further fractionalize the very company that was formed to battle industry 500-lb. gorilla Marvel: Image Comics. With Image Comics' founding fathers Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld and Marc Silvestri currently drawing Marvel characters, and Lee and Liefeld forming their own companies independent of Image, the need for a centralized corporate headquarters for the "Dream Team" is obsolete.

In 1992, Erik Larsen, Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Marc Silvestri, Jim Lee and Jim Valentino formed Image Comics with the intent of publishing creator-owned books in which the artists would reap the benefits of their work. They pooled resources, contributing a portion of their revenue to Image to handle areas like distribution deals, publicity and marketing. Most of these studios are now equipped to handle every facet of publishing, including distribution deals, publicity and marketing.

The popular studios have all built successful, independent businesses. So why should they split up the pie and share the revenue? Today, only Liefeld, Lee, Silvestri and McFarlane are major players in the comics market. Liefeld, Lee and Silvestri have entered into crossover deals with Marvel, while McFarlane's *Spawn* is a consistent top five-selling book. By accepting these types of deals, these artists are popularizing their own work through characters from competing companies at the expense of Image products. And all that creative time and energy spent on Marvel books means less time and energy devoted to Image books. And that can't sit well with the Image creators who *don't* have deals with Marvel. It only makes sense for the dominant forces behind Image—Lee, Liefeld, McFarlane and Silvestri—to divest themselves from the company and reap the individual benefits they originally sought when they formed Image. A restructured Image featuring Larsen, Valentino and other creators may survive, but the company is sure to undergo sweeping changes.

57 CHANNELS WITH NOTHING ON? TRY THE COMICS NETWORK.

It's just a matter of a company or network organizing the whole thing. Don't believe us? Just take a look around on your local cable affiliate. There's ESPN, MTV, E!, HBO and Nickelodeon, for 24-hour sports, music, entertainment, movies and educational programming. For niche audiences, there are such highlights as a dedicated sci-fi channel and a cooking channel. Even a golf channel. Well, why not a comics channel?

We'll focus our daytime programming on cartoons. We can begin the day with classics like "Super Friends," "Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends" and the classic Marvel cartoons of the 1960s ("Thor," "Hulk" and "Captain America"). Then in the afternoon, we'll segue into current cartoons like "The Adventures of Batman and Robin," "The Tick," "X-Men," "WildC.A.T.s," "The Savage Dragon," "UltraForce" and "The Mask." By prime time, we'll be ready for live-action shows like "Batman," "The Green Hornet," two different Superman shows, "The Incredible Hulk," "The Flash," "Shazam!" and "Wonder Woman." And don't forget about our movie-of-the-night potential. We can show "The Crow," "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," "Dr. Strange," "Captain America," "Wonder Woman," "Punisher" and a host of Batman and Superman movies. Throw in a few original programs—an MTV-like show in which we talk comics, some behind-the-scenes of future animated/film projects like "Spawn" or "Silver Surfer," and a Home Shopping Network-type program in which we sell comics—and we've got ourselves a network.

AMERICAN ARTISTS WILL BE STUDYING THE WORK OF MASAMUNE SHIROW.

"If I can have my way...slowly but surely we'll transform X-Men into a cool manga book," said *Uncanny X-Men* artist Joe Madureira.

Manga? X-Men? You bet. And you can also bet that the artists of tomorrow will in turn be tracing that style back to the man who inspires Madureira's work, Japanese legend Masamune Shirow.

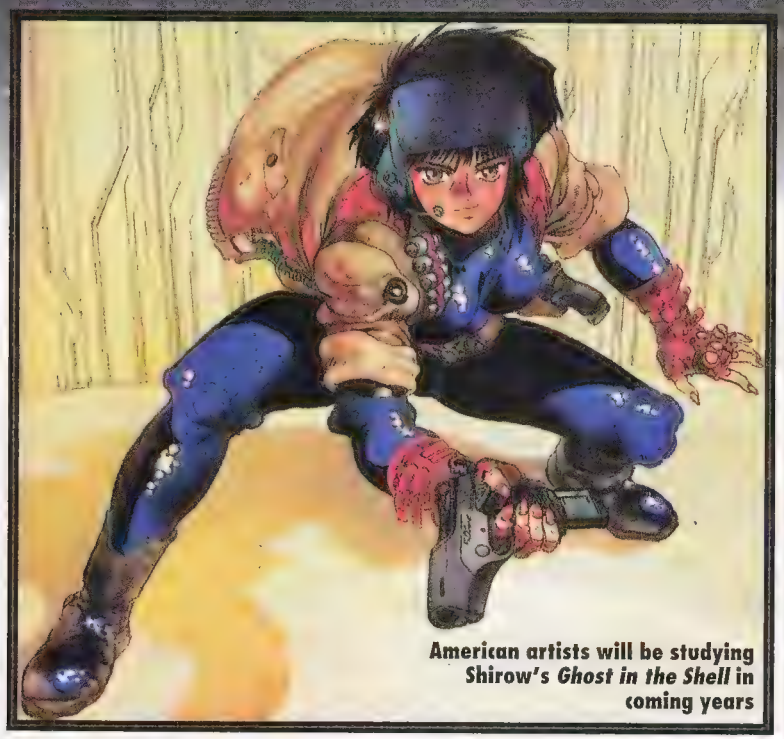
Shirow is the creator of such popular manga works as *Appleseed* and *Dominion*, published in the U.S. by Eclipse, and *Orion*, published domestically through Dark Horse. But it is his work on the famous *Ghost in the Shell* (Dark Horse) that has won the admiration of American fans and artists with Shirow's trademark intricate, detailed style, sexy women and lush use of screentones.

"He is probably my biggest influence," *Gen13* artist J. Scott Campbell said of Shirow. "*Ghost in the Shell* blew me away."

With hot artists like Madureira and Campbell adapting some of Shirow's style, it's only a matter of time before more begin to follow suit. While creators of the past few years may have studied the work of such legends as Jack Kirby and Neal Adams, it will indeed be Masamune Shirow from whom the artists of tomorrow draw their inspiration.

YOU WILL SEE CHAINS OF MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT STORES.

Walk right past the Disney Store and Sesame Street Store in your local mall and head directly for the Marvel Entertainment Store. This comic-fan's paradise will be overflowing with X-Men and Spider-Man comics, posters, T-shirts, sweatshirts, dolls, toys,



American artists will be studying Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell* in coming years

glasses, dishes, videos, you name it. But fear not, mutant and arachnid haters, 'cause you'll find *all* your favorite Marvel characters adorning the merchandise here. Unlikely, you say? Not at all. Considering the comics juggernaut that Marvel's become over the years, the fact that the company owns its own distributor and that it recently made a deal with Planet Hollywood to open a Marvel Comics-themed restaurant in New York City, opening Marvel Stores is just plain profitable. DC Comics characters are already taking up space at the ever-growing Warner Bros. Studio Stores, and BIG Entertainment's filling malls nationwide with its comic-packed kiosks, ensuring you copies of your favorite Tekno comics, as well as many other comic-related items. Be prepared to hop around from store to store to get different publishers' books and merchandise as more and more companies open their own exclusive retail shops in an area near you.

MOVE OVER, X-MEN AND SPAWN—SUPERMAN WILL FLEX HIS MUSCLES AS THE NEXT MEDIA JUGGERNAUT.

1992's "The Death of Superman" media explosion proved that the Man of Steel is the world's most recognized comic character, and it's time for another huge mass-market push. Now that ABC's "Lois and Clark" show is a winner in the ratings, and WB's upcoming "Superman" animated series—and tie-in toy line—promise to be successful, the public eye will be firmly on Supes. We see a massively covered Lois/Clark comic/TV wedding celebration in the near future (since it's been reported that DC will not present the wedding until the TV series does), and the fifth Superman film—which is in development and should finally come out by 1999 or 2000—will undoubtedly offer amazing special effects, making it the best Superman film yet. Continuing media awareness about original "Superman" actor Christopher Reeve's paralysis will add to the box-office draw. Warner Bros., which recently bought back the Superman movie rights, will undoubtedly exploit the character's box office power and plan several Super-movies, using the company's extremely lucrative Batman formula: top-notch directors, big-name actors and a huge budget. These blockbusters will catapult Superman to a new level of worldwide fame.

WHEN YOU BRING PREACHER TO THE CASH REGISTER, PREPARE TO BE CARDED.

Big Brother is watching. The V-chip will allow parents to control what their children watch on TV. As comic retailers are increasingly charged with selling "obscene" materials to minors, pro-censorship organizations—or

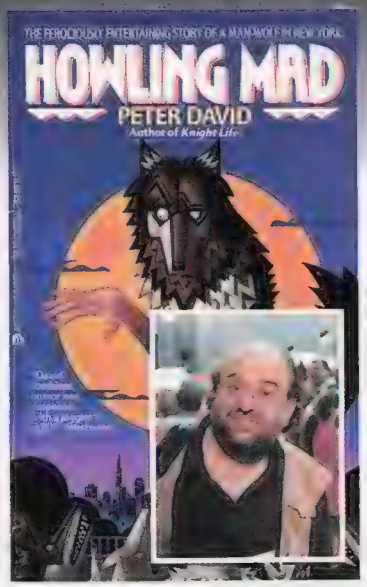
A movie will put Superman over the top

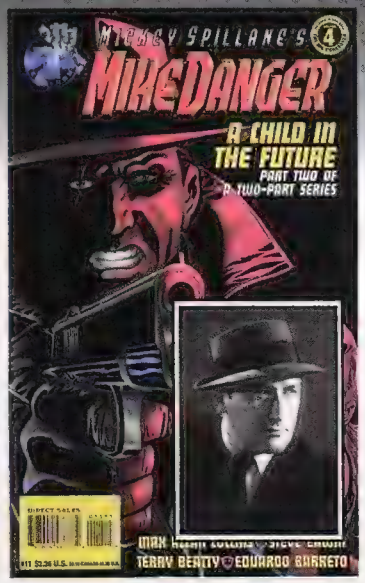
SOUND BITES

"A LOT OF PEOPLE SAID I'D NEVER WORK AGAIN AFTER 'BATMAN.'"
—*Bat-actor Adam West...who hasn't really worked since "Batman" (Wizard #53, january 1996)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

the government itself—will set their eyes on the comic book industry and force publishers to follow the video game and TV industries in policing themselves. BIG Entertainment has already started rating its books, and by the turn of the century, most publishers—not wanting to be run by the government—will take the initiative of the major Hollywood production studios that established the Motion Picture Association of America in 1922 (following public complaints about indecency in films and an increase in government censorship of them). Just like the MPAA (which created the ratings classifications for films), publishers will institute an industry-wide ratings system in which mature reader-oriented comics will feature either an "18+" or "AM" (Adult Material) box on their covers, and retailers will ask the buyers of these books to show proof of age. Suddenly, comic books like *Preacher* and *Sin City* are sold on the same rack as adult magazines like *Penthouse* and *Playboy*.





True writers, like Peter David (left) and Mickey Spillane (right), will step up to create comics for the future

TOMORROW'S WRITERS WILL NOT COME FROM COMICS.

Who will be tomorrow's creators? Don't be surprised if you're reading their novels or watching their TV shows today. Most of the poor writing over the past few years has resulted from rehashed comic book stories from writers whose only influences have been drawn from comics. In order for any comic book writer to survive and become successful, it has been proven that one must dig for gold in a different mine shaft.

History tells us that the best comic book writers are pure *writers* who draw upon other forms of media; they just happen to use comics as their medium of expression. Alan Moore. Frank Miller. Neil Gaiman. John Byrne. Peter David. All of them could write novels (and a few of those mentioned actually have).

And even writers like *Batman and Robin Adventures*' award-winning Paul Dini, *Lady Death*'s Brian Pulido and *Curse of Spawn*'s Alan McElroy got their start in the TV and movie industries and are now making their mark on comics.

BIG Entertainment's Tekno•Comix has continued the trend of attracting major league talent from outside the industry like Tom Clancy, Leonard Nimoy, Mickey Spillane and John Jakes to focus their ideas and concepts on comic books. However, BIG must go the extra mile and have the big name authors completely write the comics, instead of someone merely interpreting their concepts. Imagine the level of success Tekno would achieve if Clancy or Spillane were actually *writing* their comics.

Plus, comics are cheaper than any feature film and have even proven to be an excellent spawning ground for blockbuster films a la "Batman" and "The Mask." Novelists like John Grisham and Stephen King just might find comics to be a good medium to exploit for a bigger payoff later on.

THE TRADITIONAL ARTIST WILL BECOME OBSOLETE.

The widespread use and integration of computers into the comic book medium has drastically affected, some even say made obsolete, the use of living, breathing inkers. (Comic-coloring house Digital Chameleon recently announced a new process in which it can color un-inked pages.)

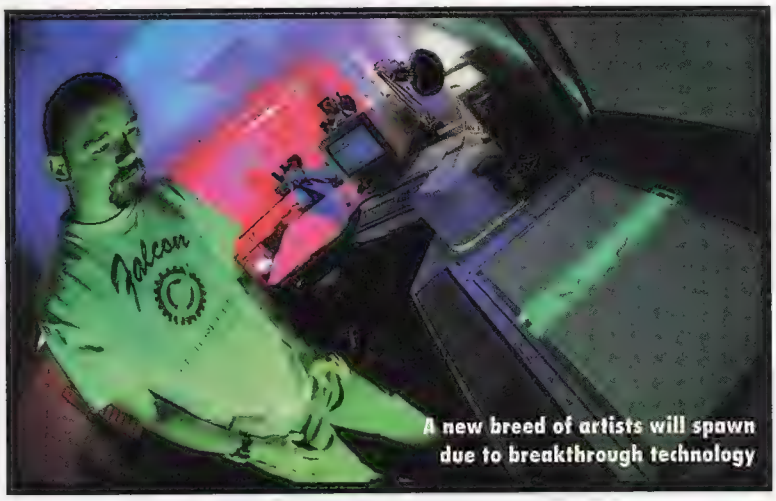
Traditional colorists and letterers have gradually seen more and more of their workload handled by computers. While they still need a human hand to guide them, computers are getting more advanced every day.

And pencilers? With computer effects finding their way into more comics every day (in the form of out-of-focus backgrounds, speed-blurs and underwater effects), future artists will have to learn to incorporate more "special effects" into their page layouts, panel designs and, ultimately, their finished art.

Why? Today's consumers are faced with a lot of choices for their entertainment buck. A comic's true competition now comes from video games, computer games, surfing the Internet, a whole host of "razzle-dazzle" entertainment products. Enhanced covers don't cut the mustard; the non-enhanced interiors make consumers feel like they're getting less than a total package. The inside of the book has to satisfy a more discriminating consumer.

If you think the way comics are produced has drastically changed over the past five years, you ain't seen nuthin' yet. W

The Wizard staff fully expects to get its butt kicked for doing this feature.



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Basic Training

this month's host: Joe Quesada

How to Draw a Killer Cover

Why are covers so important to a comic? Simply put, they're the first thing that you, the potential buyer, see when looking at the shelves of comics in your local shop. The cover is what's going to sell the book.

An unsuccessful cover can make a great book lose potential reader attention, whereas a really kick-ass cover can draw readers to it like toothless people to a monster truck rally. The striking element doesn't necessarily have to be a pretty drawing. On the contrary, a successful cover can also be done via the actual layout, the placement of blacks, the use of negative space or the use (or lack thereof) of color. When you're looking at the lovely splattering of colors on the comic shelf, sometimes something as simple as a plain white cover can grab attention. In a roomful of screaming people, sometimes a whisper stands out.

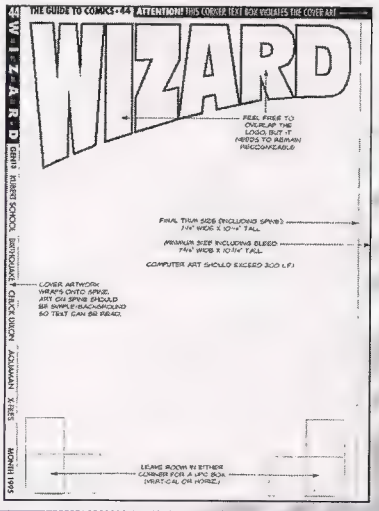
For this demonstration on what goes into a cool cover, I chose the Superman cover for *Wizard* #59. It's the toughest assignment an artist can get handed, because nearly every idea you may come up with has already been explored. The challenge is compounded by the fact that Superman has been drawn by the greatest artists on the planet—from Jack Kirby and Neal Adams to Curt Swan, Jerry Ordway, Gil Kane and John Byrne. If you're someone who's satisfied with rehashing others' ideas, stop reading here and head to the next article. Coming up with something that these guys haven't is truly a daunting task.

Step One: The Rough Layouts

My complete assignment was a Superman cover, with just the character by itself, not interacting with any bad guys. How do you make this cover interesting? I started by taking what I call my cover/page sequence "cheat sheet." This sheet (seen below) is comprised of 12 boxes, each of which works out to the proportions of a comic book cover or page. This sheet allows me to work in a "stream of consciousness" approach, which lets me play each idea off of its predecessors, enabling me to get a rhythm of the design established. I took each box, and roughed in the little wedge-shaped element, which represents the "wedge o' cheese"-shaped *Wizard* logo. From there, I proceeded to rough out 12 different covers based on what I thought might work, leaving myself notes as to the best approaches as I went along. Let's take a look at each of the 12 roughs, and comment on their effectiveness (basically which ideas suck, and which ones don't).

FIGURE A

To start off, we have the lovely *Wizard* cover template. Whether you're doing a cover for *Wizard*, or any comic book, you have to take the logo into consideration. There are things that can be done with the logo, in terms of interaction with the character, that can make an interesting layout. Some magazines and some editors prefer that the logo remains untouched. I actually like to utilize the logo as a layout element, as long as the logo remains recognizable. (Unless it's a new title, in which case I would steer completely clear of the logo.) In *Wizard*'s case, you need to only see a portion of the logo to know that it's *Wizard*. At this point *Wizard* is essentially an icon logo, so it's fair game for layout manipulation. So, kiddies, sharpen your pencils, and get your rear in gear, because it's time to get cracking!



SOUND BITES

"EVERYBODY KNEW SUPERMAN WAS GOING TO COME BACK. ON ANY GOOD ROLLER COASTER RIDE, YOU KNOW YOU'RE GONNA GET OFF AT THE END...BUT IT'S STILL FUN WHILE YOU'RE ON IT."
—*Superman Editor Mike Carlin* (Wizard Superman Special Edition, *1993*)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

FIGURE B

This was a typical vision of Superman, one that we've seen dozens of times. It's Superman flying right at you, which seemed to me like the most logical place to start. If I was to use this version, I felt that the figure would have to be repositioned down lower, away from the logo; but regardless, this one blew. I say that because this pose has been done so many times before, and done better.

BORING!!! IT'S BEEN DONE..

FIGURE C

Figure B did give me one bit of inspiration: Superman in the clouds. However, this particular rough is an example of an inappropriate angle to use on a superhero. Although Superman happens to be one of the few characters that has his insignia on the back of his costume, this just doesn't work. Although I did like the upward movement of the figure, taking into consideration that *Wizard* wants a "pin-up" shot, this is hardly the most compelling pose.

FIGURE D

Here we have the old "punching the logo" layout. I actually liked this one, and it was probably one of my three favorite choices of the 12 roughs. Just the same, I felt it was a bit cliché (but I may use it for an Ash cover), which leads us to...

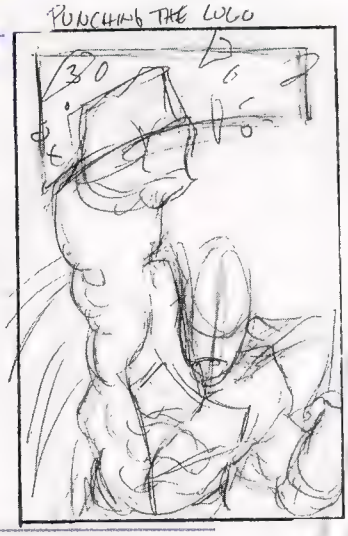
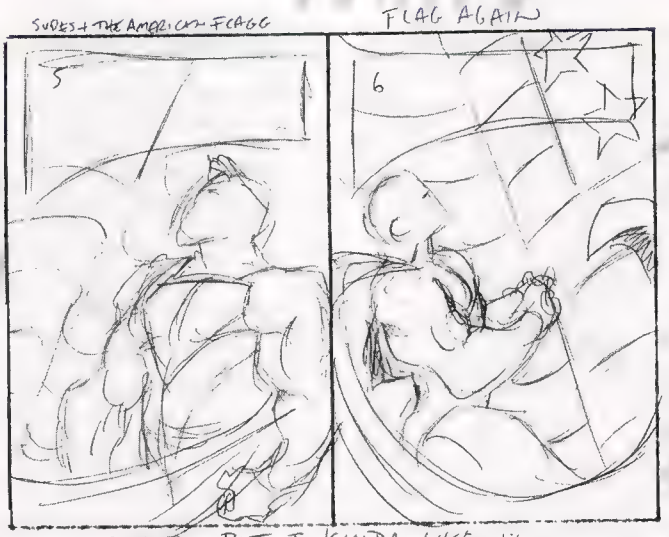


FIGURE E

This is another breaking through the clouds shot, with Supes scowling down on the reader. Immediately, I felt this one had cover potential. I was definitely taking this rough to a second step in terms of a tighter layout.

FIGURE F

This is a little more of a romanticized view of Superman, pictured with the American flag (the only thing missing is Mom's apple pie, with Rush Limbaugh's face down in it). This layout would also be one where color played a major role, blending his costume into the flag.



CORNY BUT I KINDA LIKE IT

FIGURE G

Once again I'm utilizing the American Flag as a design element. I really like this layout, basically because of the swoop of the cape and flag, combined with Superman reverently looking at the flag. I figured that this was a layout both DC and *Wizard* would approve of, because this is the essence of Superman. My note below the two flag roughs says it all: "Corny, but I kinda like it."

FIGURE H

This is your basic heroic pose shot. Just look under the rough, and you'll get my thoughts on the layout. I did try some harsh lighting on this layout to spice it up, figuring that I can play with the lighting to add more drama to the piece (in terms of stream of consciousness, you'll see the lighting used here play an integral role in the final product later on).

FIGURE I

This layout is identical with Figure E, but if you'll notice, I have him looking upwards, towards both the sky and the logo.

FIGURE J

This is a Superman who's obviously ticked off, and the harsh lighting really adds to the figure's demeanor. I thought it would be cool to add in a computer effect, giving him nasty, orange, X-ray vision eyes. Something about this piece didn't do it for me, though. He would have been taking too much of the logo space up, so to move him down on the page would have gotten rid of his most identifiable thing about him, his insignia. Mental note: This would make a killer splash page somewhere down the road.

FIGURE K

I'm back to breaking through the clouds again. It's a little stagnant to me.

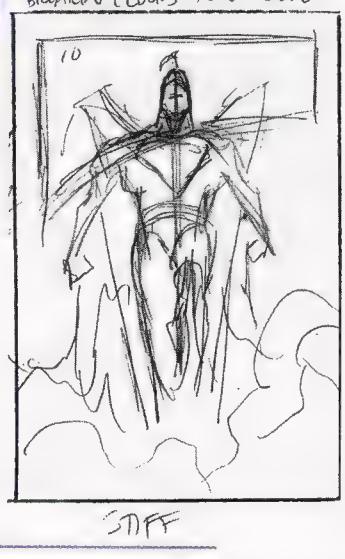


FIGURE L

Much like my first rough, this is another "coming right at ya" shot. I realized right off the bat that neither Superman logo would be very noticeable, so this piece is too ambiguous.

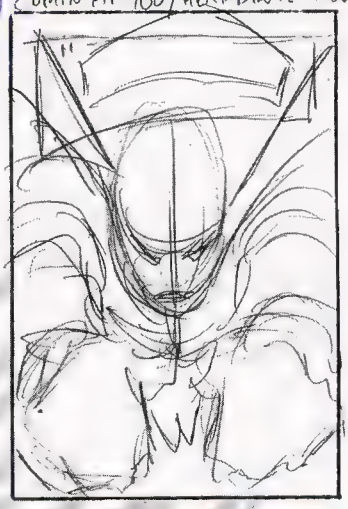


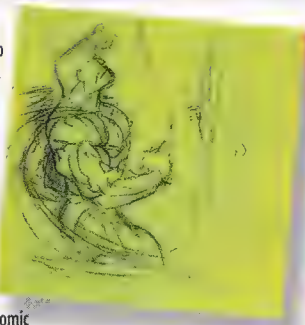
FIGURE M

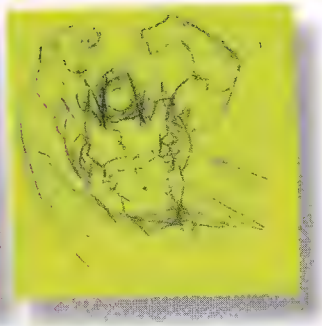
Finally, we have my old standby, using architecture as part of the design and layout. As you can see by my notes, I would have flopped this image so that Supes would be moving left to right. This is one of my unwritten rules about cover design. I generally try to keep the action (however small it may be) moving left to right (that's how most people read, and the eye is trained to move in that direction). This is especially important when doing single-panel covers. If you're doing a wraparound cover, I would use the right-to-left movement, because you want to deliver the reader's attention to the other side of the cover.

SOUND BITES
"I HAVE TO BE HONEST: I HATE FIRST ISSUES OF ANYTHING."
—Rob Liefeld, who is currently set to draw Captain America #1 (Wizard #21, May 1993)
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Step Two: Tightening Up the Figure Drawings

FIGURES N,O & P





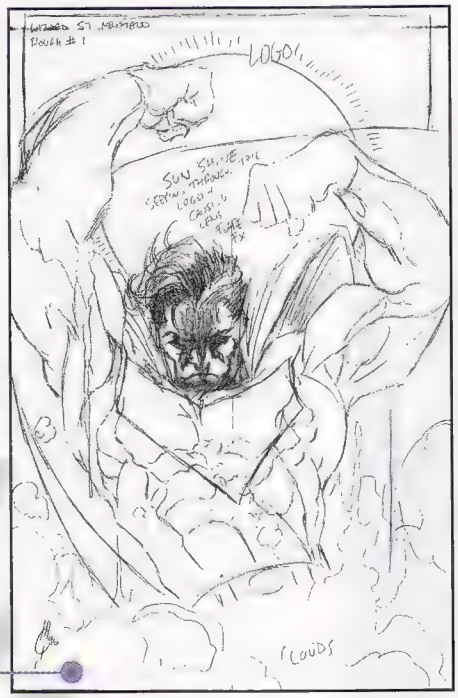
In the end, I decided the two roughs I wanted to explore further were one of the bursting-through-the clouds layouts, and one of the American Flag roughs. As you can see, these three designs were done on Post-it notes, and serve to further explore the two potential designs. This is the stage where I begin to work on the anatomy and musculature. Figures N and O would be for a flag-based layout, while P is obviously Supes bursting through the clouds. When I size up the roughs for final layout, I do them in actual comic book size. The reason is that when you're working on the 10" X 15" size, the human eye can only grasp half the page in one viewing. But if you do it in actual comic size, you'll see exactly what the reader will be seeing.

Step Three: Tight Layouts

FIGURE Q

This is the final rough of Superman with the American flag. The description on the border is to let the editor know how the colors of the flag would interact with Superman's costume. This particular layout was rejected in lieu of…

FIGURE R



In this version, I've indicated some of the high-contrast lighting I was going to use for the entire figure. Because this layout would be faxed to *Wizard*, I only indicated the lighting on the face, because the fax would have come through as a messy piece of crap.

It was at this point that the editor informed me of three things: 1) He liked this cover the best; 2) it had to be the long-haired version of Superman (ugh); and 3) he wanted the higher of the two hands to be the one on the right side of the cover. I flipped over this particular layout, and then placed it on a lightbox and traced the flipped image on another piece of paper. This leads us to…

FIGURE S

On this layout, I indicated all of the high-contrast lighting, and made a judgment call of having him looking up to the heavens, getting energized by his "Mother Sun." (This goes back to Figure I on the "cheat sheet.") I felt that with this piece, the color would be doing the bulk of the work, with the wispy clouds contrasted against this hard figure bursting into the sky. At this point, I got final approval on the cover piece, and proceeded to begin penciling the final piece.

FIGURE T

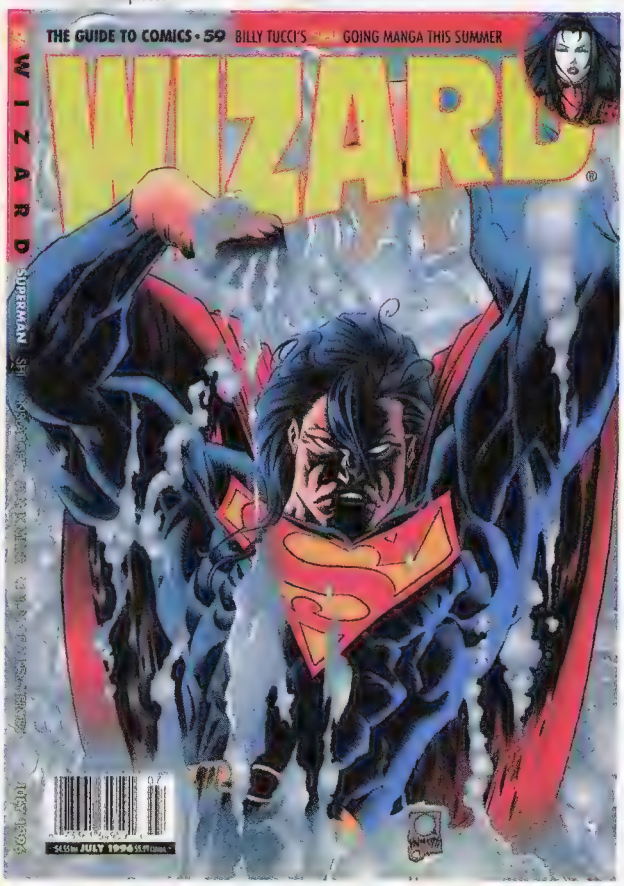
These were the original final pencils, but I stopped the drawing this far into it, because it was at this juncture that I realized that having him looking into the clouds was a complete and utter failure. I went back to the face I used in Figure R, with Supes looking down and at the reader. When you're doing a cover with one figure, it's often advantageous to have the figure looking at the potential sweaty-palmed consumer, drawing them into the book. In the final version, I wanted Superman to connect with the audience.

FIGURE U

On this final piece, I changed it to having Superman's head looking down and glaring at the reader. I gave explicit instructions to the colorist, Reuben Rude, on how to handle the piece, from the hard blacks on Superman to the light tone of the sky. This final piece has a lot of vertical movement to it, which at times can be stagnant, but I liked it because it reminded me of my favorite rendition of Superman, which is Frank Miller's from *The Dark Knight Returns*. From there, I gave this final piece to Jimmy Palmiotti to ink.

FIGURE V

The final colored piece!



Step Four: Final Lessons

Before I go, let's go over some other simple rules concerning covers. First and most importantly, I listened to the editor. This is crucial because they're the one with final approval, and the idea of what they want you to draw. Don't go off on a creative tangent if it's veering away from the editor's original idea (unless you discuss your ideas with the editor first). You'll just be wasting your time, and getting someone who has the potential to give you more work annoyed at you.

This particular piece was for a newsstand cover, which played a major role in my approach. Newsstand readers aren't necessarily avid comic book readers, so this piece had to really pop and be easily recognizable.The *Wizard* logo, being the icon it is, is still clearly visible. I made sure that Superman's insignia is very prominent, and that he's looking right at the reader. The pose itself is a quiet one, but using color and lighting, I was hopefully able to bring the volume up on the piece.

Essentially, covers for me are a multiple-step process:

1) Talk to your editor, find out what they want, and get a cover template.
2) Do a series of sketches, finding out what works, and what doesn't.
3) Rough figure drawings.
4) Using my handy-dandy Xerox machine (you can also use an overhead projector), I zoom up the figures to layout size, from which I do the tight pencil sketch.
5) The final pencils.
6) If that doesn't work, see #2.

The actual fun of doing covers is the challenge of trying to give the reader a hint of what's going on in the book with one shot. The art of doing a great cover is not just a captivating design, it's a great design that also tells a story in one big picture. Good luck with your future cover endeavors, but remember: When the potential comic buyer is looking at that big pizza pie known as the crowded comic book shelf, you want to make sure it's your anchovy they're looking at. W

Joe Quesada can be seen penciling and co-writing his and Jimmy Palmiotti's Ash, *and making sure his band Joe's Alibi avoids doing covers.*

SOUND BITES
"I DON'T THINK I COULD HANDLE THAT. IT'S A LITTLE BIT DIFFERENT. SHE'S A WOMAN."
—Wizard *Contributing Editor Marc Wilkofsky on the differences between the sexes*
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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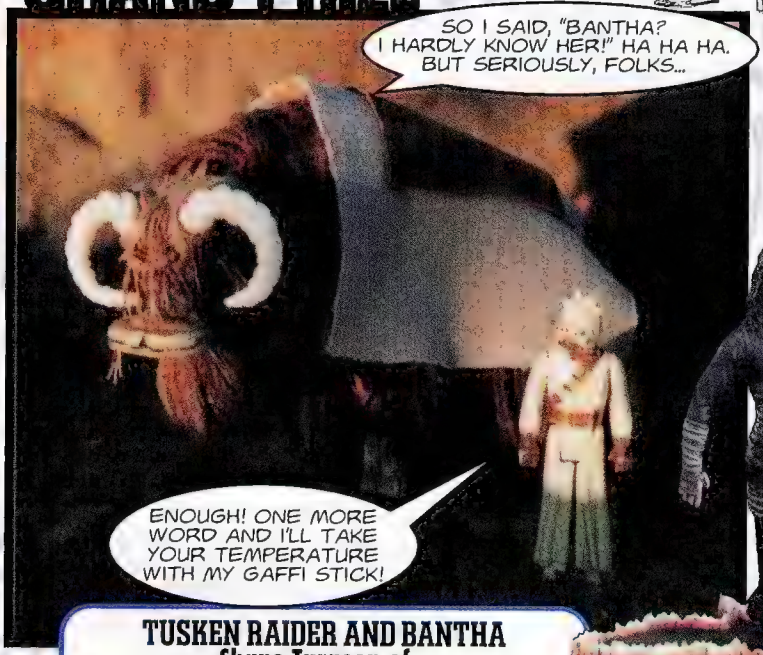
SON OF HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

It's time again for a special edition of "Homemade Heroes," in which you folks created actual scenes by producing new figures from plain old, ordinary figures (or from scratch) and using household materials (including living ones)! Each of these talented creators will receive copies of *The Crow: Dead Time* #1-#3. The Runner-Up will get a Crow vinyl model kit along with the Crow issues, and the Grand Prize Winner runs away with all that stuff plus a limited-edition The Crow cold-cast porcelain statue (see left). Fine work, people!

Thanks to the folks from Kitchen Sink Press, Top Dollar and Inteleg for their generous donation of prizes. You people are the strings on our guitars!

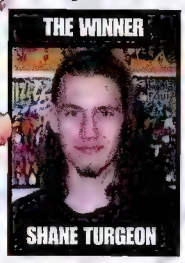
GRAND PRIZE



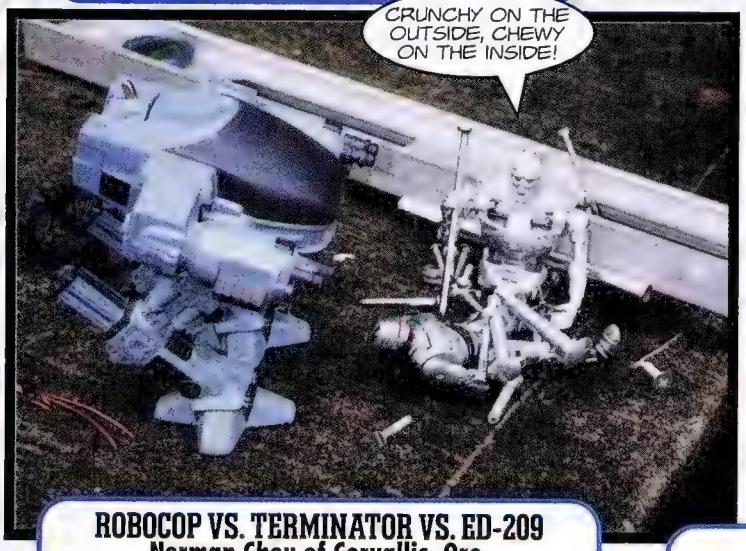
TUSKEN RAIDER AND BANTHA

Shane Turgeon of Beaumont, Alberta, Canada

Shane's excellent use of lighting and setting gives him high marks. The Bantha was made from a Stargate Mastadge creature with cut-out cloth.



RUNNER-UP



ROBOCOP VS. TERMINATOR VS. ED-209

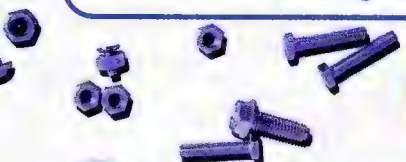
Norman Chou of Corvallis, Ore.

Wisely using household items—like screws and nails—can produce a cool scenario. Here, Norman also used a Kenner Terminator figure, plus Kenner RoboCop and ED-209 figures.

THE ABOMINABLE VS. A LOTTA CABLES

Seth Bitling of Millerstown, Pa.

We just love the use of house pets for this gig. Seth used different Toy Biz Cable figures and his doggie.



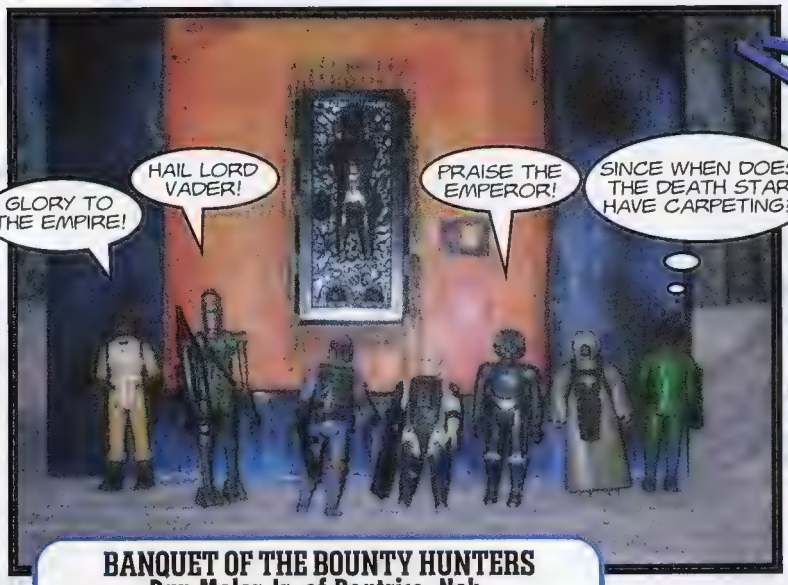
SOUND BITES · the best quotes of the last 5 years...

"I LOOK AT THE X-MEN AND I THINK, 'THIS IS MY ENTIRE WORKING LIFE, AND IT'S TAKEN THEM 18 MONTHS TO GUT IT LIKE A FISH.'"

—*Chris Claremont (Wizard #22, June 1993)*

BATMAN IN CRIME ALLEY
Charlee Flatt of New Port Richey, Fla.
A cool use of props makes this one really sing. Add in a hand-sewn costume and you've got a cool setting.

VIOLATOR VS. THE RAT
Jacob Burkhead of Ashland, Ore.
Another cool—and grotesque—use of a household pet. The result? A bloody McFarlane Toys Violator figure!



BANQUET OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS
Dan Moler Jr. of Beatrice, Neb.
Dan used pre-existing Kenner Star Wars figures for this shot, with a neat result. In front of the Han Solo in carbonite figure are Bossk, IG-88, Boba Fett, Dengar, Zuckuss, 4-LOM and Greedo.

HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, description of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Hart at Work

With so many comic creators weaving long and complex stories just to show off, it's refreshing to read the work of Tom Hart. He's able to create a multi-layered story that isn't bogged down in corny plot devices or useless dialogue. His stories are told quietly and efficiently; you don't realize the depth and thought behind them until you finish reading one. What might look like simple scribblings on the surface turns out to be a creation that will stay in your thoughts for a long time.

With each project he's worked on, Hart has pushed himself to try longer and more complicated stories. After publishing a few short mini-comics in the early '90s, Hart broke out in 1994 with *Hutch Owen's Working Hard*, a full-length comic about a street poet and his struggles against the idiocy of corporate society. His next project, *New Hat*, broke from the linear storytelling of his previous book with a group of interlocking stories about a war-torn world of poets and exiled presidents.

His new series, *The Sands*, promises to be even more ambitious than his earlier work. Hart has planned out almost all of the particulars from beginning to end of its seven- or eight-issue run. Serializing a story is something new for Hart, and he admits he's a little nervous. "It's pretty weird. Originally, it was planned as an open-ended ongoing series, but I can't seem to do anything that way. Everything I do has to have a beginning, middle and an end."

The plot of *The Sands* is simple enough. It revolves around a man, Little Hawk Troy, and a woman, Margie Fennel, who move to a Middle Eastern desert. She's there to study bugs, while he spends his days occupying himself in various ways. In his wanderings, he meets up with a young boy who happens to be king of the area they live in, as well as Sen, a mysterious, mystical man who makes his home on a river.

Hart is challenging himself with *The Sands* by trying new things as he pieces together all the different parts of a long narrative. "It's an experiment in composition," he explains. "It's going to be in three separate parts, all of which are pretty different. The first will be a pretty basic story, but the next is going to be a tangent. It will involve Little Hawk and a musician character in a different setting. Then the final part will jump around rapidly to different scenes and times from the first part, but with various things we haven't seen before and new revelations about the situations we're seeing."

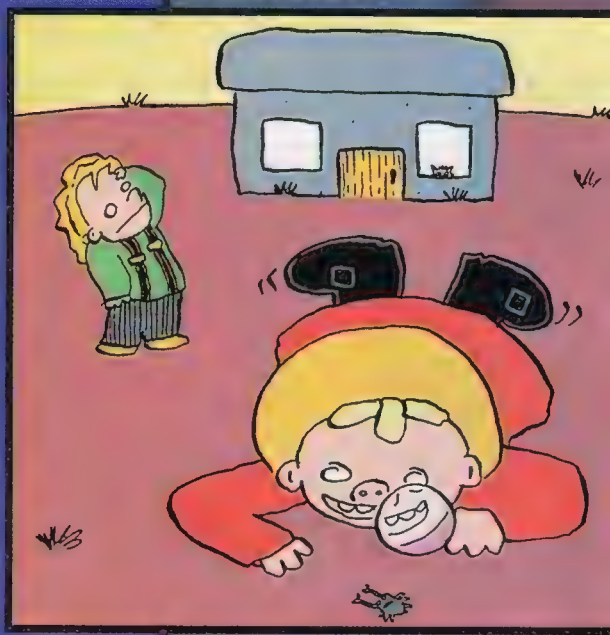
Like *New Hat*, this series will present the reader with a few challenges. You may have to reread certain sequences to pick up details that eluded you the first time. But it's all part of Hart's big plan. "I want people to do a little work and pay attention. Maybe give in a little and realize that everything isn't going to be laid out for them. It's not going to be like a trolley ride; it's more like putting a puzzle together. For people who are willing to put in the time, I hope it will be really entertaining for them. But I also hope that I don't have too many pretensions about what I'm doing."

Making a complicated, layered story takes a lot of planning and preliminary work. Before he started *The Sands*, Hart tried something new and didn't bother with the typical character sketches and bio sheets. Instead, he just started drawing comic stories to work out the characters and settings. "A lot of times, the early work—where you're just trying to understand what your idea is—comes from a lot of thinking or writing ideas out. This time I wanted to draw things in comic form instead. I just let my mind wander to different settings, characters and plots until eventually I settled down with the characters I felt closest to."

Aside from trying different methods during the planning stages of *The Sands*,

Deceivingly simplistic, Tom Hart's *The Sands* challenges readers with complex stories and characters

Art from *The Sands* #1



SOUND BITES

"IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HIGHLY INTELLECTUAL, THOUGHT-PROVOKING, STIMULATING MATERIAL, I'M PROBABLY THE WRONG GUY TO GO TO."
—*Rob Liefeld (Wizard #10, June 1992)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

by tom palmer jr.

A cute critter from *The Sands*

Hart is also exploring different ways of drawing and composing a comic book page. "This book is going to have a maximum of four panels on the page, and there's going to be a lot of space around them." Hart also recently bought a lightbox—a contraption that enables you to trace images—which helps when fine-tuning his final pages. "It's easier to redraw things. If I have a panel finished but it's not good enough, it's not that laborious to draw it again. It used to be where I would just let a lot of bad panels go by, but now I'm finding myself pasting a lot of redrawn panels over other panels."

All of this redrawing and rethinking is important to Hart because he's experimenting with how sequences of panels can be repeated in different ways within a story. "There are certain panels whose repetition might change the meaning of things going on in the story. Things that appear can maybe appear again in a more fleshed-out form, or appear later as a fragment. Also, things change by where they're placed in the storyline. Things don't have to happen linearly, and once you break out of believing everything is about telling one simple story as clearly as possible, then you can start to see that things can be complex and challenging and puzzling. It's more like a tapestry or a mosaic than a straightforward narrative."

Hart is interested in breaking away from traditional storytelling, but he's also careful to make sure his comics aren't incoherent. "If I felt like this was the only thing motivating me, I could do really formalistic things and wind up with just gibberish, but I don't want to do that. It's just an effort to make things more challenging for myself and my readers. It's also driven me to stay interested, open new doors and unlock new parts of my mind."

While Hart is committed to exploring the technical side of composing comics, he also admits that he's in it for the pure fun of drawing and telling stories. "I think a lot of it, for me, is devoting energy to understanding why comics moved me so much as a child. For that reason, I'm very happy to stick around with comics. They've certainly provided me with a whole lot of pleasure and enlightening moments throughout my whole life. I love making funny pictures, and I love making the pictures better and putting them together." W

Tom Palmer jr. just escaped from college and desperately needs a day job. Please send all inquiries c/o Wizard: The Guide to Comics.

FYI

The first issue of *The Sands* is set for a June release from Black Eye Productions. The company also still has copies of Tom Hart's earlier works, *Hutch Owen's Working Hard* and *New Hat*. You can contact Black Eye at 5135 Parc Ave., Suite #5, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4G3. E-mail them at mail@blackeye.com and check out their Web site at http://www.blackeye.com.

Tom Hart's Recommended Reading

Tom Hart says, "What excites me more than anything in comics is ambition, so I tend to enjoy the more ambitious stuff. But then again, there are ambitious things I don't enjoy." Some of the challenging comics that Hart does enjoy include: *Acme Novelty Library* by Chris Ware, Chester Brown's *Underwater*, *Jim* and the new *Frank* series by Jim Woodring, *Ghost Ship* by Jon Lewis, Megan Kelso's *Girlhero*, and Joe Chiappetta's *Silly Daddy*.

Recommended Reading

• **Top Shelf** This anthology offers a good sampling of the new breed of alternative cartoonists. So far, editor Brett Warnock has managed a nice mix of names you might have heard about like Tom Hart, *Little Mister Man*'s James Kochalka, and *King-Cat Comics* mastermind John Porcellino. There's also fresh new faces like Ulana Zahajkewycz, Gheena and *Yikes!* creator Steven Weissman. The third issue should be on sale in June, but if you can't find a copy of *Top Shelf*, then contact Primal Groove Press at PO Box 15125, Portland, OR 97293-5125. E-mail them at bawarnock@aol.com. Individual issues are $5 postpaid, and be sure to ask for a copy of Primal Groove's nifty catalog.

• **Silly Daddy** After creating an impressive autobiographical story in the initial issues of *Silly Daddy*, Joe Chiappetta has taken autobio comics to a new level. His new story, "A Death in the Family," speculates on what life would be like for his family and friends in 2004. It's interesting to see Chiappetta's vision of the future (complete with barcode tattoos and hand-held, electronic comic books), but the thing that makes reading *Silly Daddy* (right) worthwhile is his wonderfully expressive cartooning and laid-back sense of pacing and storytelling. Write to Joe right now for more information on *Silly Daddy*. He has recent issues available, as well as the trade paperback, *Silly Daddy: The Long Goodbye*, which collects the first seven-issue storyline. His address is 2209 Northgate Road, N. Riverside, IL 60546-1339. Or e-mail him at sillydaddy@redweb.com. And check out the *Silly Daddy* Web site at http://www.redweb.com/sillydaddy.

TRAILER PARK

Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

BATMAN RETURNS—in Animation

By Rob Allstetter

Two **Batman** movies at the same time? It's going to happen.

A new, straight-to-video animated Batman movie is in the works at Warner Bros. Animation. The still-untitled film is scheduled to be in stores in the summer of 1997, to coincide with the theatrical release of **"Batman and Robin."**

Boyd Kirkland, who directed 26 of the 85 episodes of "Batman: The Animated Series," is overseeing the story, along with directing and producing. Randy Rogel is writing the screenplay. The movie will be in the style and continuity of the animated series.

The villain, as in "Batman and Robin," will be **Mr. Freeze**. "The story revolves around him trying to save the life of his wife, who is frozen in a cryogenic state," Kirkland said.

Barbara Gordon will be another key figure in the hour-long film, although Kirkland said she will only make a brief appearance as Batgirl.

Kirkland said he hopes to get the same voice performers back from the animated series, including Kevin Conroy as Batman and Michael Ansara as Mr. Freeze. Recording sessions are expected to take place in late June.

And there could be more. Kirkland noted that, after Fox's contract on the TV series expires, new episodes of "Batman" could be produced for broadcast on Kids' WB.

There might also be more direct-to-video movies. "I guess a lot depends on how this one does," Kirkland said.

THE ANIMATED BATMAN AND ROBIN RUSH TO VIDEO IN TIME FOR THE NEW BAT FLICK

WHITE IS SPAWN

Michael Jai White, who has already proven he can punch someone's lights out in the movies, has been signed by New Line Cinema to play the lead role in the live-action **Spawn** movie based on Todd McFarlane's characters.

White is best known for his work in the title role of the HBO film "Tyson," about heavyweight championship boxer Mike Tyson. At press time, sources said he was being sized for the two expensive Spawn costumes.

"Spawn" is expected to go into production later this summer for a summer 1997 release. The movie will be directed by Mark Dippe from a script by Alan McElroy.

FOX PREVIEWS FALL PLANS

X marks the spot—and it doesn't—for the Fox network.

"The X-Files" is getting a new time period, but **"Generation X"** was left out entirely from Fox's new prime-time lineup for the fall, announced May 21.

"X-Files," which has been a rating success for Fox on Fridays at 9 p.m. (ET), is moving to Sundays at 9 p.m. beginning next season.

"Generation X," which aired as a two-hour movie in February, could end up at another network, but the most likely scenario now would be a syndication stint. Sources told *Wizard* that New World Entertainment is planning on one live-action syndicated series for the next television season based on Marvel Comics characters, and candidates include Generation X, **Nick Fury** and **She-Hulk**.

The "Doctor Who" movie in May attracted mediocre ratings and apparently won't become a series.

Taking the place of "X-Files" on Fridays is "Millennium," another series from "X-Files" creator/producer Chris Carter. Set at the turn of the century, "Millennium" stars Frank Black as a brilliant former FBI agent with special powers, who joins a mysterious underground task force to protect an ever-crumbling society.

Fox gave a surprising renewal to the low-rated "Sliders," which will return to its Friday 8 p.m. timeslot. Among the shows canceled were "Space: Above and Beyond," "Strange Luck" and "Kindred: The Embraced." **"The Simpsons"**

LANCE HENRIKSEN STARS IN FOX-TV'S "MILLENNIUM"

had scored an early renewal and will be back Sundays at 8 p.m.

TOP COW'S 21 IN '97

Marc Silvestri's **Top Cow Productions** has entered a deal with Film Roman to produce two new animated television series.

First up is **"21"** for 13 syndicated episodes beginning in the fall of 1997. Eric Lewald, Mark Edens and Michael Edens, who all worked on "X-Men," are developing the series, which will be accompanied by a toy line from Playmates. Top Cow's Brad Foxhoven said it's possible that "21" could premiere with a sneak-peek episode in the first half of 1997.

The second series is based on a new, as-yet-untitled comic book from Top Cow. Foxhoven said the comic will have a science-fiction bent and should be released later this year.

Foxhoven noted that the Cyberforce animated series remains in "active development" at DreamWorks, and discussions continue on two live-action Top Cow projects.

GOING UP WITH ANTI-GRAVITY

"The Anti-Gravity Room," the weekly comics-based TV series, has been renewed for a second season on the Sci-Fi Channel. Reruns of the first season's 26 episodes will air until the magazine-style show's second season begins in the fall.

"It's not an entirely bad thing if we show the first 26 again, because people are just now discovering the show," said producer Chris Greaves. "All of a sudden, the [ratings] numbers keep going up and up."

Added Greaves: "The show keeps evolving, and the format is changing. We're seeing what people want to find out about, and we're skewing it in that direction. I don't think we've scratched the surface yet of things we can do."

Segments of "The Anti-Gravity Room" will be filmed at this summer's San Diego Comic Con.

"Millennium" photo courtesy of FOX-TV.

Kevin Smith Chases 'Amy' Movie

As the camera pans around the crowded comic book convention in the opening scene of **Kevin Smith**'s new movie, **"Chasing Amy,"** it comes to rest on **Mike Allred** in a heated discussion with a character named Ethan, the world's biggest comic book fan.

For Allred, creator of Dark Horse's ***Madman Comics***, the arts of independent comic book creation and independent film-making blend nicely.

"I kind of got into comic books because it was a way of drawing my movies," said the 34-year-old Oregonian, who currently is working on a movie script for Universal Studios. "Film is a constant learning process and one that is very satisfying for me."

In addition to his cameo in "Chasing Amy"—he speaks the first line of the movie—Allred created the covers for the fictional *Bluntman and Chronic* comics used in the movie and also served as a kind of technical consultant for the film. The character's studio, for instance, is based on Allred's in Eugene, Ore.

"Chasing Amy" is a film about two friends, Holden McNeil (Ben Affleck) and Banky Edwards (Jason Lee), who find sudden success in comicdom with their less-than-artistic book, *Bluntman and Chronic*. Edwards revels in their commercial success, while Holden finds it unfulfilling and longs to do alternative comics that are more "relevant."

"I'm the real-life counterpart of Holden McNeil," Allred said. "There's a danger of becoming pretentious with comics. I support the alternative, non-superhero comics. Superhero comics will always have a place and support in the industry.

"In my earlier work I really wanted to do something that stretched the boundaries of comics a little bit. But they didn't sell. All of the books that are really pushing those boundaries have had to struggle for their audience. That's the main facet of Holden's character I identify with. In finding that niche, you run the risk of becoming pretentious."

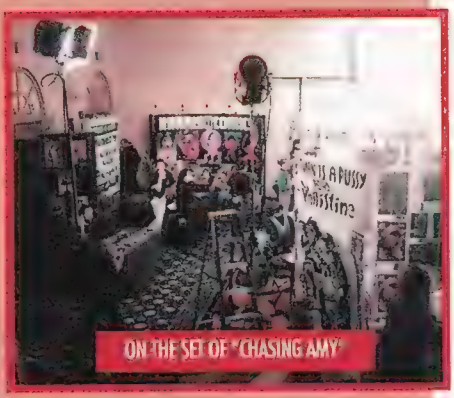
The struggle for independence *and* success was one element of the comic book industry that drew Smith and producer Scott Mosier to use it as the backdrop for their film. "It's a profession that's never been treated seriously," Mosier said.

"Chasing Amy" begins and ends at the comic book convention, shot in the Berkeley-Carteret Hotel in Asbury Park, N.J. Smith, an avid comic book fan who grew up on *Batman*, based the set on New York conventions he attended as a child.

Bluntman and Chronic are based on Jay and Silent Bob, characters from Smith's earlier movies "Clerks" and "Mallrats." Smith, a 25-year-old film director based in Red Bank, N.J., also plays Silent Bob. He frequently uses references to comic books in his movies, and **Stan Lee** had a small part playing himself in "Mallrats."

Smith created "Clerks" on a shoestring budget with unknown actors but won critical acclaim, including an award at the Cannes Film Festival. In "Mallrats," Jay and Silent Bob are loosely based on Batman and Robin, with a narcotic bent.

Smith hopes to publish a real *Bluntman and Chronic* comic with the release of "Chasing Amy," and is talking about a black-and-white comic book series based on "Clerks."


ON THE SET OF "CHASING AMY"

Mike Rafferty

Allred, meanwhile, has followed Smith's example and is preparing to release his own movie, **"Astroesque"**—shot in two weeks and paid for with options money from *Madman* and *G-Men from Hell*—on the independent film festival circuit. (Poster art from the idea appears in *Madman Comics* #10.) He is also working on the script for a Madman movie with Universal.

In addition to Allred's work, you may want to look for Kurt Van Waller's hand in "Chasing Amy." He did the cover for *Idiosyncratic Routine*, the comic created by Holden's romantic interest, Alyssa Jones (Joey Adams) in the movie. ■ *Joe Cavaluzzi*

VAMPI TO THE SMALL SCREEN

A live-action, made-for-cable movie based on Harris Comics' **Vampirella** is in production in Las Vegas. The film, from Sunset Films and Concorde Pictures, will air on Showtime either in September or October.

Talia Soto stars as Vampirella, and Roger Daltrey, lead singer of The Who, plays Vlad. Daltrey also played a vampire of sorts on the season finale of "Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman."

Roger Corman is executive producer, and Angela Baynes is producing. Jim Wynorski, who has directed numerous movies for Corman, is directing from a script by Gary Gerani.

SNIPES IN THE HUNT

"Blade" will be made. Sources told *Wizard* that **Wesley Snipes** is in final negotiations to star in a movie based on Marvel's **Blade, the Vampire Hunter**. Production of "Blade" will fit into Snipes' schedule and is expected to begin as early as January for a 1997 release from New Line Cinema.

British director Steve Norrington ("Death Machine") will direct from a script by David Goyer.

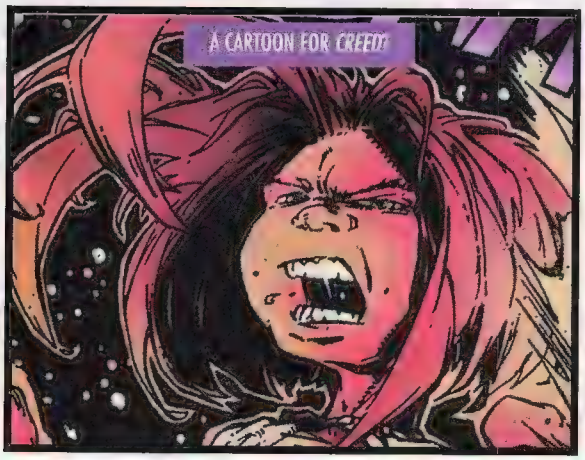
MIGHTY MARVEL UPDATE

Goyer has also turned in a script for a **Venom** movie at New Line. Reportedly, the script will have Carnage as another alien symbiote who is

trying to bring Venom back to their home planet. As with all the Marvel projects, **Stan Lee** and **Avi Arad** are executive producers, and, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*, Stephen Chao, John Langley and Eli Cohn will produce....The proposed **Punisher** telefilm, due to its violent nature and what sources called "the current political climate," won't be on television, but might be developed into a feature film. Marvel is also looking to develop **Captain America** and **Longshot** movie projects....The **X-Men** movie script is still being polished, and sources indicated Andrew Kevin Walker ("Seven"), who wrote an original draft, has been or will be called back into the project....Fox pushed ahead the third season of the **"Spider-Man"** animated series, airing episodes from the "Sins of the Fathers" story arc in May, including a guest appearance by Doctor Strange and the first appearance of the Green Goblin. Joan Lee, the wife of Marvel's Stan Lee, is doing the voice of Madame Web.

CREED TO BE MATINEE ATTRACTION

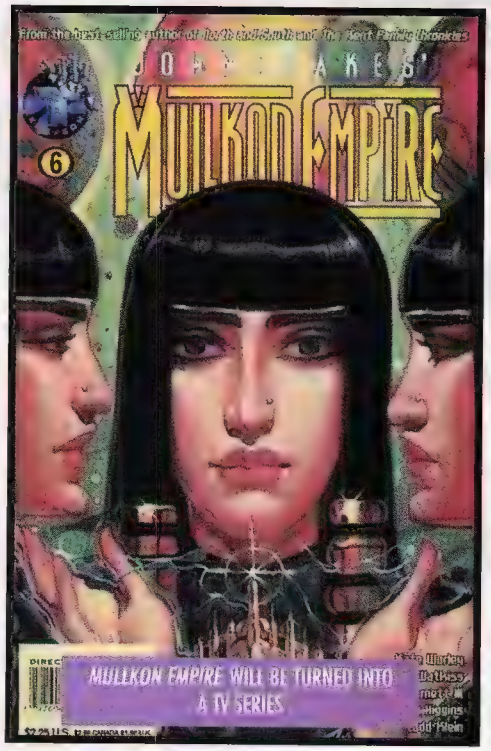
Matinee Entertainment has acquired the rights to ***Creed***, the Lightning Comics title created by 19-year-old Trent Kaniuga, to develop an animated series. The deal also provides Matinee with the rights to create other entertainment properties based on the *Creed* characters.



"Trent will be working in the capacity of creative supervisor for this project, to see that the animation is as close to the comic book as possible," said Lightning co-publisher Steven Zyskowski. "We're all very excited, and believe *Creed* will be received very well in 'mainstream' America."

TONS O' SHORT TAKES

Vendela, the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit cover model, has signed to play the wife of **Arnold Schwarzenegger**'s Mr. Freeze in the fourth Batman film, **"Batman and Robin,"** which begins shooting in September....What does director **Joel Schumacher** think of **George Clooney**, the new Batman? "Wait until you see him in black rubber," Schumacher told *People*. "George will be totally different—more witty, less tortured." And what does Schumacher now think of **Val Kilmer**, his Batman in "Batman Forever"? "Val got fired for being an a - - - - - -," Schumacher told *US*. "That's the real story." So who is the fans' favorite Batman? According to a poll on "Entertainment Tonight," **Michael Keaton**, who starred in "Batman" and "Batman Returns," is by far the most popular. Kilmer placed second in the poll, and Clooney third. (Check out *Wizard* #59's news section for our own poll, which had similar results.)...**"The Crow: City of Angels"** will be in theaters Aug. 2....Jean-Pierre Jeunet, co-director of "The City of Lost Children" and "Delicatessen," will direct **"Alien Resurrection."** Production is expected to begin in Los Angeles this September for a spring 1997 release from 20th Century Fox. **Sigourney Weaver** and **Winona Ryder** will star....Alice Krige, whose credits include "Chariots of Fire," will play the Borg Queen in the next **"Star Trek"** film, which is now called "Star Trek: First Contact."...."Space Cases," the science fiction/adventure series created by **Peter David** and Bill Mumy, has been renewed for a second season of 13 episodes. Cinar will resume production in Montreal this summer, with new shows due in September or October. **George Takei**, Sulu on "Star Trek," appeared in the first-season finale....**"Animaniacs"** was the big animation winner at the Daytime Emmy Awards, held in New York City on May 22. The show took best animated children's program and the Achievement in Animation honor. **"The Adventures of Batman and Robin"** scored best music direction and composition, while "Freakazoid" came away with best original song, beating out two soap operas and "The Oprah Winfrey Show."...Alliance Television Productions has acquired the television rights to **John Jakes' *Mulkon Empire*** from BIG Entertainment. Alliance has reached an agreement with Village Roadshow Pictures to co-develop the property for television....Rip Torn ("The Larry Sanders Show") has joined the cast of **"Men in Black,"** the currently-in-production movie based on the Malibu Comics characters....**"Pinky and the Brain"** will not return to the WB prime-time lineup this fall, but could come back as a mid-season replacement. The animated series will continue to air Saturday mornings....ABC has ordered 13 episodes of **"Sabrina, The Teenage Witch,"** based on the Archie Comics character. The series (in the form of a half-hour show airing Fridays at 8:30 p.m.) stars Melissa Joan Hart from "Clarissa Explains it All" and begins production in July from Hartbreak Films and Viacom. The parts of Sabrina's aunts, Zelda and Hildegard, and of her best friends, Marny and Harvey, were not cast at press time....The season finale of **"Lois and Clark: The New Adventures of Superman,"** which aired May 12, placed 43rd for the week in the Nielsen ratings. "Lois and Clark" was beaten in its time period by its old nemesis, CBS' outgoing "Murder, She Wrote," which returned to its former Sunday spot and placed 36th....**"The Mask,"** starring Jim Carrey as the Dark Horse hero, will make its network television debut on Fox during the '96-'97 season....Annette Bening ("Love Affair") has joined the cast of **"Mars Attacks!,"** the science-fiction comedy from "Batman" and "Batman Returns" director Tim Burton....**"Star Trek: Voyager"** will return for a third season on UPN. The series is moving from Mondays to Wednesdays next fall....Luke Perry, Olivia D'Abo and Ron Perlman are providing voices for USA's **"Mortal Kombat: Defenders of the Realm"** animated series. W



You don't want to know what Joel Schumacher said about Rob Allstetter. Ouch.

SOUND BITES

"I DON'T REGARD MARVEL AS A CREATIVE FORCE ANYMORE. SO MY MARVEL-BASHING DAYS ARE OVER, BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING THERE TO BASH."

Frank Miller on Marvel Entertainment, from his interview in Wizard #59

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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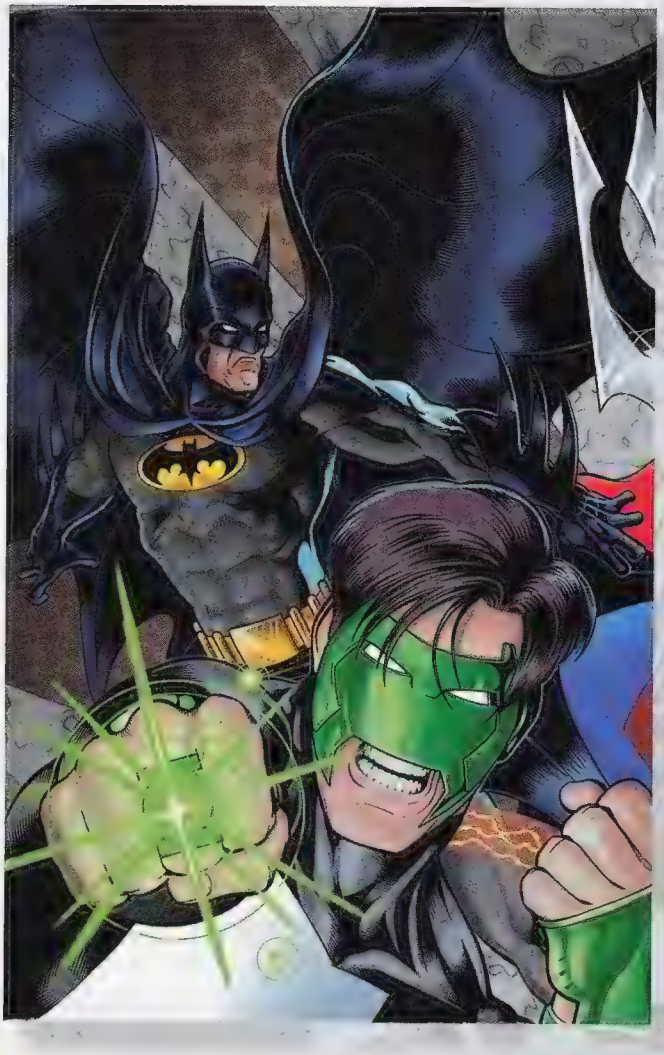
PICKS

WIZARD's list of must-read comic books coming out in July

JUSTICE LEAGUE: A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHTMARE

Writers: Mark Waid & Fabian Nicieza
Artists: J. Johnson & D. Robertson (pencilers); J. Holdredge & H. Rodriguez (inkers)
Release Date: July 3
Cover Price: $2.95



DC COMICS This three-issue mini-series returns the big guns to comics' premier superhero group and serves as a prelude to the ongoing *Justice League of America* title, written by Grant Morrison. "Grant pitched the series as needing to be about the original seven heroes," explains Mark Waid. "And I couldn't agree more." Waid and former X-writer and first-time DC writer Fabian Nicieza are working in tandem, bouncing plot and script back and forth to kick things off right.

The tale opens with the core team members in their civilian identities, lacking powers and unaware of their costumed lives. Slowly, they remember their other guises—but that doesn't explain what's going on, or why every other human around them is gaining superpowers. "The JLA members have to figure out what's causing their own problems and eventually fight their way through a phalanx of people with superpowers to get to the bottom of things," says Waid. In the process, they learn something about what makes a hero. "This story has a very distinct Silver Age feeling to it."

It sounds swell, but won't this team lose its dramatic edge, since nothing big can happen to these guys outside their own books? "I think that's a false argument," Waid says. "You can learn a lot about the characters and how they relate to each other and relate within the confines of a bigger group."

On continuity problems, he adds, "I'm hoping the days of that kind of hide-bound continuity are past. I really think a huge number of fans want the JLA to be these seven guys, done right. Seeing them in the same story together is just cool."

If you like *Justice League*, *Wizard* recommends you read... *Kingdom Come*, Alex Ross and Mark Waid's current Elseworlds mini-series about a future JLA.

MONKEYMAN & O'BRIEN #1

Writer: Art Adams
Artist: Art Adams
Release Date: Art Ad—um, July 31
Cover Price: $2.95

DARK HORSE Art Adams knew his first creator-owned comic needed two key elements: a giant gorilla, to sate his love for King Kong and Mighty Joe Young, and a beautiful woman. "I was so pleased when I put it together and came up with Monkeyman & O'Brien," he says. "Then I sat back and said, 'Omigod! I've created Angel & The Ape!' But honest, it's nothing like that at all! It's completely different!"

That's pretty obvious. After all, DC's short-lived humor comic about a beautiful model and a gorilla cartoonist didn't have ugly monsters and world-conquering aliens in every issue. "Everybody in my book has his own bunch of monsters," Adams admits. It also offers a healthy mixture of humor, adventure, that aforementioned beautiful babe and many pages of Adams' gorgeous detailed-to-make-your-eyes-bleed artwork.

Issue #1 kicks off where February's *Monkeyman & O'Brien Special* ended, presenting the duo's first villain: Shrewmanoid, an ugly little guy commanding a bunch of even uglier monsters. "Shrewmanoid is a 2-1/2-foot-tall guy who's convinced that he's God's gift to everything," Adams explains. "I'm not saying he's right," he hastens to add. "In fact, he's clearly confused."

What Shrewmanoid knows for sure is that Ann O'Brien is filled with the same type of radiation that turned him into the world's most highly evolved man. He wants that radioactive power, in order to create more monsters and take over the world. And since Ann has become the most highly evolved woman on the planet, a romantic match is only natural. Uh-huh.

Adams fans will be happy to hear the first two issues are in the can, and the third will be wrapped up shortly. Then there will be a break as he works on the next two, which he hopes to have on the schedule by the end of the year. "I see this as an ongoing-but-sporadic series," he laughs. "But I'm definitely concentrating on this comic now."

Each issue features a stand-alone story, he stresses, with only a few threads carrying over. Shrewmanoid, for instance, has a cameo in issue #2, when the toadlike Froglodytes invade Earth, but he'll play a much larger role in issue #3, when the extra-dimensional Quash tries to conquer all the dimensions as well as Earth. The story of Ann's troublesome sister, Oniko, will wrap up in issue #6, he adds. "All of my characters come back, eventually."

■ Big Picks written by Craig Shutt

If you like *Monkeyman & O'Brien*, *Wizard* recommends you read... Mike Mignola's *Hellboy: Wake the Devil* mini-series (on sale now), which has its own fair share of cool monsters, and Dark Horse's *Art Adams' Creature Features* collection out in July, which includes two "Monkeyman & O'Brien" four-pagers and Adams' versions of "Godzilla" and "The Creature from the Black Lagoon."

MORE PICKS

TITLES DENOTED WITH A **MR** CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

AQUAMAN #24

DC COMICS Aquaman and his allies Power Girl, Arion, the Sea Devils, Neptune Perkins and Tsunami gather together to fight aliens (those better be some weak freakin' aliens). Can the heroes stop their invasion of Atlantis and Earth's oceans? (Betcha Namor could.) By Peter David, Jim Calafiore and Peter Palmiotti. **$1.75**

AVENGERS #402

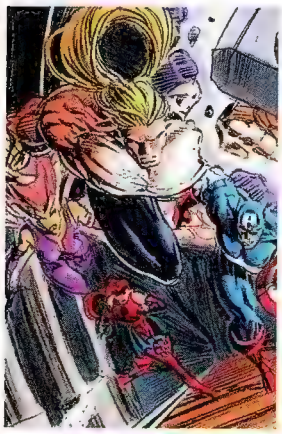
MARVEL On his rampage through the Marvel Universe, Onslaught decides to stop by and visit the Avengers, Earth's Mightiest Heroes. It's an all-out battle for supremacy as buildings are torn apart, cars are tossed around like toys and house pets make like water balloons—kinda like that movie "Twister." Who will survive? Who will die? Who gets to be drawn by Extreme Studios in a couple months? Find out here. By Mark Waid, Mike Deodato Jr. and Tom Palmer. Waid says, "I think this issue turned out very well. By this time, all of Manhattan is shut down and the heroes who tried to fight Onslaught have been beaten back. It's time for the Avengers to make their resurgence, but Captain America seems to have lost his faith. He seems to have completely lost his spirit, and that shakes the rest of the team right to the foundation." **$1.50**

BATMAN #534

DC COMICS "Legacy," Part 5 (of 7). Batman journeys to Calcutta to stop Ra's al Ghul's people from re-releasing the plague that hit Gotham City. Bats has to team up with Lady Shiva (that pesky little ninja who smacked him around like a French schoolgirl) and stop the bad guys from killing the world! By Doug Moench, Jim Aparo and Bill Sienkiewicz. **$1.95**

BATMAN & ROBIN ADVENTURES #10

DC COMICS Batman's old friend Ra's al Ghul is back and he has plans to spread a deadly plague throughout the world…wait a minute. Anybody else get a weird feeling of *déjà vu*? No? Probably just us being queasy from them "Heroes Reborn" Captain America sketches. Anyway, Batman's gotta trek off to al Ghul's island and stop the madman before he can harm anyone. The only good thing is that Bats will get to see that little minx Talia again. By Ty Templeton and Rick Burchett. Templeton says, "When I originally wrote this story, I wrote it before 'Contagion' existed [in the regular-continuity Bat-books]—at least I didn't know about it. This is the *Batman & Robin Adventures* version of it. And you can read the entire story in 22 pages! Issue #11 has a surprise guest villain—something is haunting the Batcave, but they don't know who or what it is." **$1.75**



AVENGERS #402

BATMAN/GRENDEL II, BOOK 2: DEVIL'S DANCE

BATMAN: GCPD #2

BIRDS OF PREY: MANHUNT #1

BATMAN BLACK & WHITE #4 (OF 4)

DC COMICS The conclusion of this one-of-a-kind mini-series featuring Batman in pure black and white. No additives, no preservatives. Don't be looking through these pages for a single super-cool Batman story, though—try looking for five of them. In this ish you'll see stories by writers and artists such as Brian Bolland, Katsuhiro Otomo, Dennis O'Neil, Archie Goodwin and many more. If you liked the first three, you'll like this one. **$2.95**

BATMAN/GRENDEL II, BOOK 2: DEVIL'S DANCE

DARK HORSE COMICS Grendel-Prime's got the skull of Hunter Rose (a.k.a. the original Grendel) and is looking to get out of Gotham before Batman can find him. But no one, not even the Muppets, gets out of Gotham without a stern talking-to and good pummeling from the Dark Knight himself. Be careful, Bats—this Grendel is big, mean and highly flatulent! By Matt Wagner. **$4.95**

BATMAN: GCPD #2 (OF 4)

DC COMICS Sipowicz and Simone are after a shoplifter who…oh, sorry, that's "NYPD Blue." GCPD spotlights the lives of Gotham City's finest without showing you Dennis Franz's ass. Anyhoo, this ish features tough lady cop Renée Montoya. Posing as an ambassador's wife (that's one lucky ambassador), Montoya is attacked and kidnapped by terrorists (those are some unlucky terrorists). Meanwhile, Harvey Bullock is on the trail of the "teddy bear" serial

SOUND BITES

"THERE'S PROBABLY NO OTHER CHARACTER OWNED BY A COMICS COMPANY THAT'S IDENTIFIED WITH A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL MORE THAN ELEKTRA IS WITH FRANK MILLER."
—*Former DD writer D.G. Chichester (Wizard #25, September 1993)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

MORE PICKS

killer and finds out something very...odd. By Chuck Dixon, Jim Aparo and Bill Sienkiewicz. **$2.25**

BIRDS OF PREY: MANHUNT #1 (OF 4)

DC COMICS Black Canary, Oracle, Catwoman and the Huntress all part of the same team? No way. Way! These gorgeous babes have gotta find Archer Braun, a strange and mysterious criminal whose plans for the world aren't good at all. This unlikely team will be led across the globe into the frozen heart of Siberia (Can you say "Turkey's done"?) as they try and stop this madman's plans from being unleashed. By Chuck "Name Two Books I Don't Write" Dixon, Matt Haley and Wade Von Grawbadger. Dixon says, "This is the first time all these characters have ever met in person and they don't get along very well, but they have a common goal. So they form a very uneasy alliance. It's a lighter touch than the last *Black Canary/Oracle*. It goes from the first issue into a globetrotting, more James Bond-ian adventure. We'll also be seeing Lady Shiva later on." **$1.95**

CONCRETE: THINK LIKE A MOUNTAIN #5 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Concrete is such a nice guy...thing...block...whatever...so what's he doing helping the eco-activists of Earth First! destroy logging equipment, spike trees and blow things up? Well, mostly he's just using his night vision to make sure they get where they're going safely. Unfortunately, the guys who own the equipment aren't as peaceful as he is. They come after the activists with guns. What's an anatomically incorrect slab of rock to do? By Paul Chadwick. **$2.95**

DAREDEVIL #356

MARVEL Matt Murdock has to defend Mr. Hyde's butt in court, while his alter ego, the big Double D, has to find out who's really behind the murders in Hell's Kitchen. It's a race against time (as usual) for Daredevil to find the truth before an innocent man (But Mr. Hyde's a bad guy, isn't he?) is punished. A knock-down, drag-out, nail-biting story by Karl Kesel, Cary Nord and Matt Ryan. **$1.50**

DAREDEVIL #356

GENERATION X #19

GREEN LANTERN #78

HITMAN #5

THE DREAMING #4

VERTIGO/DC "The Lost Boys," Part 1 (of 4). What do you get when you cross a Limey named Brian, Mad Hettie, Lady Johanna Constantine and three not-too-trustworthy fairies? Beats the hell out of us, but you'll find the answer in this issue of *The Dreaming*. This group converges on a certain spot in a certain forest and bang, all kinds of things start to unfold. By Peter Hogan and Steve Parkhouse. **$2.50**

THE FLASH #117

DC COMICS Flash is up and running through that damn Speed Field again, trying to make his way home. But if he knows what's good for the people in Keystone City, he'll try very hard, 'cause there's a big freeze coming. Meanwhile, we'll also get a chance to see exactly what John Fox has been up to (besides hitting on Linda big-time). Speeding toward you by Mark Waid, Oscar Jimenez, Jim Cheung, José Marzan Jr. and Hanibal Rodriguez. **$1.75**

GENERATION X #19

MARVEL She's not evil; she's just misunderstood. The White Queen didn't kidnap Generation X to kill them—she kidnapped them to protect them from Onslaught! But why run, Queenie? All ya gotta do is show a little more flesh and strike a sultry pose for Onslaught. If that doesn't stop him in his tracks, nothing will. Unless, of course, he's really Northstar, in which case you'd better stuff Banshee in a corset and panties. By Scott Lobdell, Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham. **$1.95**

GREEN ARROW #112

DC COMICS After being given a map and a seed by a dying man, Green Arrow races off to Mongolia to find the rightful owner of the seed and return it to her. Yeesh, some gift, Arrow. Next time, try chocolates or flowers or something more romantic. You ain't even getting to first, pal. By Chuck Dixon, Rodolfo Damaggio and Robert Campanella. **$2.25**

MORE PICKS

GREEN LANTERN #78

DC COMICS There's more action in this one issue of *Green Lantern* than there are Spider-clones in the Marvel Universe! (And that's sayin' something!) GL's gotta defend Manhattan (again) from all those nasty evil types that want to either take it over or kill him. All this and a new, surprising step in his relationship with Donna Troy! (Hope he doesn't find her in the fridge like the last one...) By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Romeo Tanghal. Marz says, "I'm more pleased with this issue than virtually any other that we've done. It's kind of a Green Lantern 101 in terms of where we've been, from when Kyle took the ring till now. It's a good jumping-on point for new readers." **$1.75**

HELLBOY: WAKE THE DEVIL #2 (OF 5)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Hellboy enters Castle Giurescu, home of Vladimir (Are all vampires named Vladimir?) Giurescu, with one purpose—to kill the evil bloodsucker. But once inside, Hellboy finds out just what selective Nazi breeding can create—a bald Nazi supermonster with flying metal fists (What?). Let's hope Hellboy is up to the task of kickin' some monster ass. By Mike Mignola. And in the backup, by Gary Gianni, the Monstermen take on that ever-popular bad guy Jib-Bic (um, try saying that three times fast). Mignola says of the main story, "It is the biggest disaster in the history of the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense. It starts out as one thing and it turns so much into something else that there are dead bodies littering the pavement. It's a bit grimmer than the first one. Sadly, almost everybody in this book gets killed. There's a thing that happens in this mini-series that spawns a one-shot called *Almost Colossus*. That'll be the next Hellboy book I do." **$2.95**

HITMAN #5

DC COMICS Nightfist, Gotham City's newest vigilante, is out prowling the streets for bad guys, but Hitman wants the reward for bringing him in. Meanwhile, that Johnny Navarone guy is out on the streets wanting the bounty that's on Hitman's head. Guaranteed to be violent. By Garth Ennis and John McCrea. **$2.25**

KINGDOM COME #3

POWER OF SHAZAM! #18

IMPULSE #17

DC COMICS Impulse screws up one of Zatanna's stupid backward-talking magic tricks, and the results get them thrown into a mystical land filled with stuff worse than tough mimes and watered-down gin. By Mark Waid, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

KANE #15

DANCING ELEPHANT PRESS Hey, if you don't know Sergeant Maxwell Anderson of the New Eden Police Department, this is the ish to pick up. He's the eyes, ears, nose, throat and intestines (hope he doesn't eat too much Taco Bell) of the precinct. When you want info about what's going on, he's the guy to turn to. But there's one thing that he doesn't know, and that could pose serious problems for Max. By Paul Grist. **$3.50**

KINGDOM COME #3 (OF 4)

DC COMICS How do Superman and the new Justice League deal with the newer heroes? They catch 'em and lock 'em up. But *keeping* them locked up is another story—remember, they're all kinda super. So when they start a riot, there's gonna be a heap o' trou-

WHAT I'M READING

name: **Karl Kesel**

occupation: **Writer of Marvel's *Daredevil* and DC's *Superboy & The Ravers***

currently reads:

"The comic I always sit down to read first is *Preacher*. It's just so unlike the way I think that I'm amazed by every page of it. An independent book that I really think deserves a lot more attention than it's getting is a book Caliber is putting out right now called *Cavewoman*. Budd Root [the creator/writer/artist] clearly pours his heart and soul into every issue, and it is a really, really well told story with really interesting characters. I've enjoyed what John Ostrander's been doing with *Punisher*. And probably one of my favorite comics is also *The Savage Dragon*. I can't get enough of it."

SOUND BITES

"I LIKE DAREDEVIL BECAUSE HE'S AT SUCH A DISADVANTAGE THAT HE HAS TO BE HEROIC. HE'S THE ONLY SUPERHERO WHOSE OUTSTANDING QUALITY IS AN IMPAIRMENT"
—*Frank Miller (Wizard #25, September 1993)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

MORE PICKS

ble. By Mark Waid and Alex Ross. **$4.95**

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #84

DC COMICS And the eyes have it! Really, it's only the Emerald Eye, but that's enough. This is one tough orb. Not even the entire Legion of Super-Heroes is enough to stop it. Instead, it stops *them*...and tosses them across space and time. Keep your eyes peeled, 'cause you'll have to see the outcome to believe it. By Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Lee Moder and Ron Boyd. **$2.25**

LEGIONNAIRES #40

DC COMICS The Emerald Eye...could that be the newest marshmallow in Lucky Charms since the purple horseshoes? Whatever it is, the call of the Eye is too strong to ignore. It takes in the Legionnaires one by one and turns them against each other. By the time it's done, will there even be any more Legionnaires left? Well, seeing as how there's more Legionnaires than bad Marvel crossovers, we'd have to say yes. By Roger Stern, Tom McCraw, Jeffrey Moy and W.C. Carani. Stern says, "The Legion, once again, is in pretty dire straits. A Legionnaire has died and the others are under the control of The Emerald Eye, which is trying to steer them off in a strange direction. I don't want to spoil things too much...but the readers may be talking about the last page of the story for some time." **$2.25**

THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #18

DC COMICS Worms? WORMS?!? Only the pesky Mr. Mind would use worms to try and conquer the Earth. Our boy Captain Marvel ain't afraid to touch no stinkin' worms. But elsewhere, things aren't going as well for Mary Marvel (God, that name sucks). She's gotta face the evil creature Sin all alone. Wriggled to you by Jerry Ordway and Mike Manley. Ordway says, "Everything kind of comes to a head in this issue and we wind up seeing the final fate—for now—of Mr. Mind. We certainly give Mr. Mind a good, solid reason to hate Captain Marvel. Dr. Sivana makes a sneak appearance in this issue as well. This issue is the precursor to a really fun storyline that is going to kick off the third year—it'll be a really classic Dr. Sivana story." **$1.75**

PREACHER #17

PREACHER SPECIAL: SAINT OF KILLERS #2

ROBIN #33

STARMAN #22

PREACHER #17

VERTIGO/DC "Hunters," Epilogue. Hey, when you're in disguise as a god, you can pretty much do anything you want. The Grail thinks that Cassidy the vampire is their messiah, which gives him unlimited access to all their secrets. Will the charade last? Who knows, but Cassidy is sure having a ball with it while he can. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **$2.50**

PREACHER SPECIAL: SAINT OF KILLERS #2 (OF 4)

VERTIGO/DC Your family getting killed needlessly is a good reason for going off the deep end, right? Well, that's what happened to the Saint of Killers. He was a Civil War killing machine turned nice, calm guy, but with his family's death, the bad guy just came out again. (Note: Never piss off a Vertigo comic character.) By Garth Ennis and Steve Pugh. **$2.50 MR**

ROBIN #33

DC COMICS "Legacy," Part 7 (of 7). Man, Gotham City has had one rough year. First they cancel "Batman: The Animated Series," then they put out another god-awful Batman movie and then the Apocalypse virus hits. Bats and company weren't able to stop the first two, but they put the kibosh on the virus. But now Ra's al Ghul's got a hold of the same plague and is ready to drop it into Gotham Harbor! When will it end? It's up to Robin, Nightwing and the Huntress to put a stop to Ra's before it's too late. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Ray McCarthy. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #42

VERTIGO/DC "Phantom of the Fair," Part 2 (of 4). Sandman dons his mask and, with some help from a tough cop named Jim Corrigan, starts to scour the grounds of the 1939 World's Fair looking for a brutal killer. And for those of you paying attention, you'll get to see just how Mr. Corrigan turns from serving the public to serving God as The Spectre. Spooky fun by Matt Wagner, Steven Seagle and Guy Davis. **$2.25 MR**

MORE PICKS

SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD #6 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE If you're the squeamish type, this ain't the book to read. This ish has Hartigan hunting down the guy who set him up and tossed him in the clink. Our money's on Hartigan catching 'im, beating him to death with a midget, reviving him, then beating him to death again with a small monkey! If you've been following this storyline, this is not the issue to miss! Hey, we mean it! By Frank Miller. **$3.50 MR**

STARMAN #22

DC COMICS "Sand and Stars," Part 3 (of 4). Sandman isn't the kind of guy to leave his buddy in the lurch, so when Jack Knight (a.k.a. Starman) is captured by their foe, he's off to the rescue. Along the way we even get to see some of Sandman's history and his first encounter with the original Starman. By James Robinson, Tony Harris, Wade Von Grawbadger and Guy Davis. **$2.25**

SUPERBOY & THE RAVERS #1

DC COMICS Where do superteens go to hang out, dance, drink and do whatever it is superteens do on their time off? The Event Horizon, of course. It's an interdimensional club that puts Planet Hollywood to shame. But when Superboy starts to hang out there, the cosmos is in for a pretty wild ride. By Karl "Party-on" Kesel, Steve "Drink-till-you-puke" Mattsson, Paul "The Funneler" Pelletier and Dan "Keg Stand" Davis. **$1.95**

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #13

MARVEL COMICS If you want a great read, this is the comic to turn to. See the real Spider-Man, the way he was meant to be. Spidey became what he is because of the death of his Uncle Ben, but what's he to do when death strikes twice? Will Peter have the strength to go on with his life, to say nothing of being Spider-Man? This is one issue that'll really touch you. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Vey. **99 CENTS** W

SUPERBOY & THE RAVERS #1

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #13

AT A GLANCE!

A listing of the high-profile books shipping in July

Action Comics #725 (DC) Superman is attacked by strange aliens mysteriously appearing in Metropolis. **$1.95**

Adventures of Superman #538 (DC) When a girl who has a crush on Supes is given superpowers, she decides to take whatever she wants from him. **$1.95**

Amazing Spider-Man #415 (Marvel) New York's in a major state of chaos with the arrival of Onslaught, and it's up to Spidey to set things straight. **$1.50**

Cable #35 (Marvel) Cable vs. Apocalypse. 'Nuff said. **$1.95**

Crow: Flesh and Blood #3 (Kitchen Sink) Iris Shaw, the female Crow and angriest chick since Alanis Morissette, tracks down and kills the men who murdered her, leaving the ringleader for last. Bye-bye. **$2.95**

Gen[13] #12 (Image) Having found her father, Fairchild must get to know him all over again. **$2.50**

Manga Shi: Shiseiji #1 (Crusade) Arashi's illegitimate son sets out to kill Shi so he can win his father's respect. **$2.95**

Sensational Spider-Man #8 (Marvel) Spidey's on the trail of the Looter, who has beefed himself up with more weaponry than Spidey's ready for. **$1.95**

Spawn #52 (Image) Spawn descends to level four of Hell (only five more to go) and finds that the master of this level wants Spawn's power for himself. **$1.95**

Spectacular Spider-Man #238 (Marvel) Doc Connors must make a fateful choice: rejoin with the Lizard or watch as the creature destroys his family. **$1.50**

Spider-Man #72 (Marvel) Peter's getting his Spider-powers back, but will they be enough to help Ben stop the Sentinels that are attacking Manhattan? **$1.95**

Superman #115 (DC) Now that Supes is so down in the dumps after Lois broke his heart, will he be able to stop the menace of a mere biker gang that's hit Metropolis? **$1.95**

Superman: The Man of Steel #60 (DC) Tolos the Wizard releases a creature from his bottle city—one with the power to destroy Superman. **$1.95**

The Uncanny X-Men #336 (Marvel) Apocalypse vs. Onslaught. Hmm...guess Cable didn't do so good. **$1.95**

Wolverine #105 (Marvel) Find out if Gateway is one of Onslaught's minions and why Elektra has been hanging around the X-Universe. **$1.95**

X-Factor #126 (Marvel) The battle everyone's been waiting for. Beast vs. the Dark Beast...which giant Cookie Monster will win? **$1.95**

The X-Files #20 (Topps) Mulder and Scully investigate the case of a man who seemingly had the power to kill people just by being close to them. **$2.95**

The X-Files: Season One #1 (Topps) The agents look into the disappearance of a fighter pilot and end up finding a massive government cover-up of UFOs. **$3.95**

X-Man #19 (Marvel) Sinister's got his hands on Nate Grey, but whether he'll help him or turn him over to Onslaught is the real question. **$1.95**

X-Men #56 (Marvel) Will any of the X-Men be left standing as Onslaught sweeps over the Marvel Universe, destroying everything in his path? **$1.95**

X-Men Unlimited #12 (Marvel) Juggernaut finds himself trapped in the Cytorrak Gem and wants out! And what the Juggernaut wants, he gets. **$2.95**

SOUND BITES

"I'M GOING TO BECOME THE MOST-HATED MAN IN COMICS."
—*DC Editor Kevin Dooley, the guy who made Hal Jordan a psycho (Wizard #26, October 1993)*

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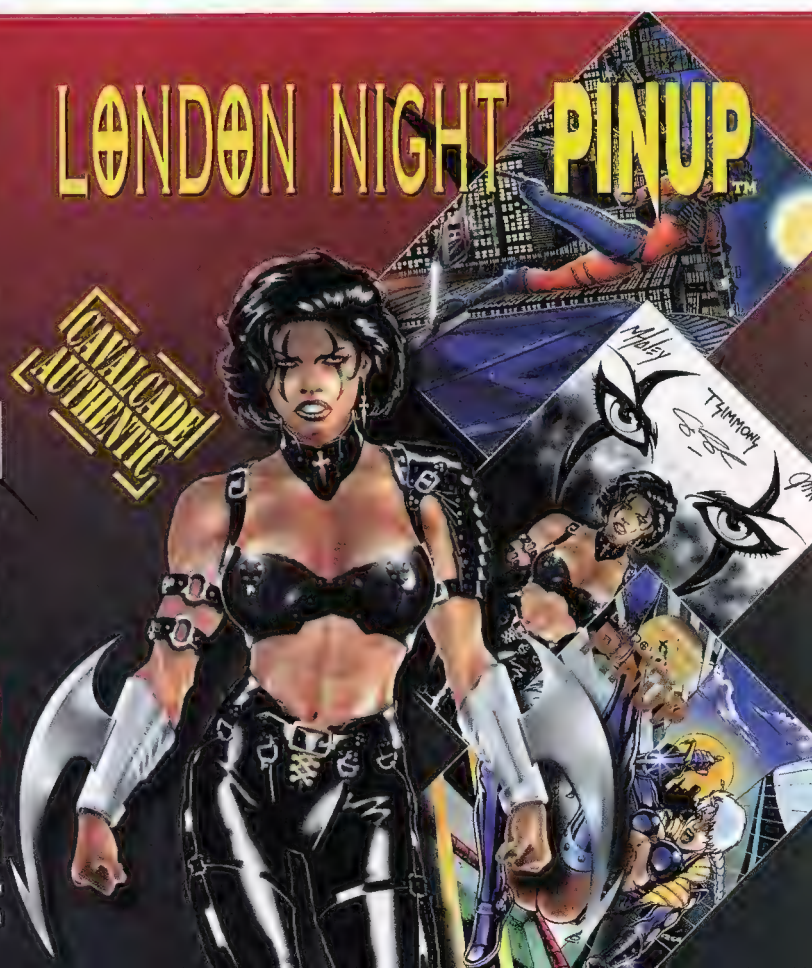


THE TOY CHEST

THE FUTURE OF TOY BIZ

Toy Biz has got plenty in store for the remainder of 1996. So for you curious collectors out there, here's a month-by-month breakdown of the cool Toy Biz action figures you can expect to see in toy stores this year.

JULY: BEN REILLY, X-MEN FLASHBACK AND THE END OF IRON MAN/FF

The Amazing Spider-Man assortment will surely be a hot item in July. Retailing for $5.99 a figure, this assortment will contain Ben Reilly Spider-Man (featuring the new Spidey costume), Spider-Man 2099, Spider-Woman, Total Armor Rhino and Stealth Venom.

An X-Men Flashback series, based on the animated show, will feature Bishop, Killspree, Polaris and Savage Land Wolverine. Geez, can we ever have enough Wolverine figures? Approximate retail price is $5.99 apiece.

The Iron Man Armor Warriors assortment, originally scheduled for July, has been canceled. It was previously announced that this series would include Dark Aegis, Lava Armor Iron Man, Living Laser, Magnetic Armor Iron Man and Radiation Armor Iron Man. According to Toy Biz sources, future Iron Man figures are unlikely, as sales didn't justify a continuation of the line.

The previously released fourth series of Fantastic Four and Iron Man will become part of the Marvel Action Hour packaging. Since Fantastic Four and Iron Man are now discontinued lines, this appears to be an effort by Toy Biz to get rid of countless figures taking up warehouse space. The fourth series of Fantastic Four includes Johnny Storm, Medusa, Psycho Man, Thing (in wrestling tights) and the Wizard. Iron Man's fourth series contains Crimson Dynamo, Inferno Iron Man, Samurai Iron Man, Subterranean Iron Man and War Machine. They all go for $5.99 each.

AUGUST: VENOM, FIGHTIN' HEROES AND OVERPOWER FIGURES

Venom: Planet of the Symbiotes, based on the comic book series, will be a new line starring Spider-Man's archenemy. The first assortment in the line of six-inch figures will include Hybrid, Lasher, Riot, Scream and Venom: The Madness. Each figure, retailing for $7.99 apiece, comes with a slimy Symbiote Wall Crawler that actually climbs walls looking for victims.

The Marvel Heavy Hitters line was designed to re-create classic battles between Marvel's most popular heroes and villains. Hulk, Spider-Man, Venom and Wolverine are five-inch figures that feature removable triple-trigger-action controllers for punching and kicking. Approximate retail price will be $9.99 for single packs and $19.99 for dual packs (Spider-Man vs. Venom, and Hulk vs. Wolverine).

August will see the release of an OverPower Universe series, a Wal-Mart exclusive with a limited distribution of 10,000 figures. For those not in the know, *OverPower* is a popular collectible card game featuring Marvel characters. Four figures will make up the assortment—Adam Warlock, Bone Claw Wolverine, Night Stealth Iron Man and Scarlet Spider. An Adam Warlock figure has never been included in any line, although one was slated for a Fantastic Four assortment last year, but was canceled. The figures will retail for $5.99 and come packaged with four exclusive *OverPower* game cards.

SEPTEMBER: HYDRO-MAN, DARK BEAST, SUGARMAN AND HULK

Making their way to retail outlets in September are two Spider-Man assortments—Arachniphobia and Cyber War. The Arachniphobia group ($9.99 a figure), finds Spidey genetically fused with his greatest enemies and includes deluxe wind-up figures of Man-Lizard, Spider-Goblin and Vampider. The Cyber War assortment ($5.99 apiece) will contain Black Cat, Cyborg Spider-Man, Dr. Strange, Doppelganger Spider-Man and Hydro-Man. The Cyborg Spider-Man comes furnished with a giant snap-on robotic arm and a cannon shoulder pad. Hydro-Man actually shoots water from his oversized fists.

Four different Spider-Man Skyscraper Stunt Action Sets will be available in September at a suggested retail of $9.99. The sets include Daily Bugle with Jump Action Spider-Man, Oscorp Generator with

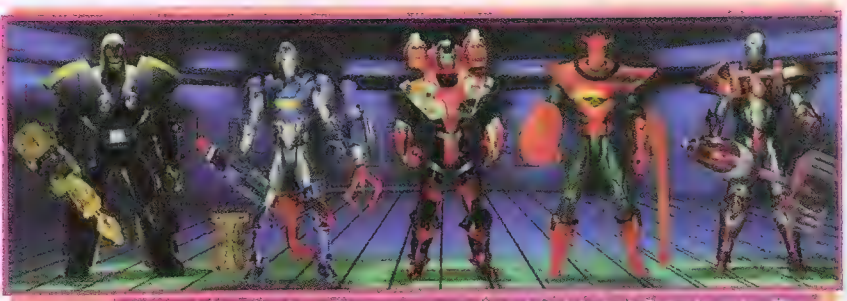
September's X-Men Shattershot series (L. to r.): Patch Wolverine, Colossus, Archangel, Lady Deathstrike and Age of Apocalypse Beast

BY DAN ALBAUGH

SOUND BITES

"IT WILL BE A TRAGEDY, BUT AN UPBEAT TRAGEDY."
—Neil Gaiman on "The Kindly Ones," The Sandman's swan song (Wizard #28, December 1993)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...



The canceled Iron Man Armor Warriors assortment (L to r.): Dark Aegis, Radiation Armor Iron Man, Lava Armor Iron Man, Living Laser, Magnetic Armor Iron Man

Gliding Web-Wing Spidey, Kingpin Headquarters with Spin-Attack Spidey, and Skyline with Tight Rope Spidey. All figures in the Stunt Action Sets measure 3 1/2 inches.

A ton of great X-Men figures and accessories are slated for September. First up is the X-Men Shattershot series, retailing for $5.99 apiece, which features characters from the animated television program. Included in this batch are Archangel with wing-flapping action, Age of Apocalypse Beast with a wind-up chainsaw, Colossus with a super-punch gauntlet, Lady Deathstrike with transforming bio-tech weaponry and Patch Wolverine with a total assault arsenal.

An interesting line called X-Men Mutant Monsters will arrive in stores in September. Simply press a button on the back of the six-inch figures for action and sound. Included in the line are a Dark Beast that claws and growls, and a Werewolf Wolverine with slashing and howling action. A sure favorite will be Sugarman with a demented laugh and extending-tongue action. These deluxe figures will have an approximate retail price of $9.99.

Pit Wolverine against the Hulk in August's Heavy Hitters line

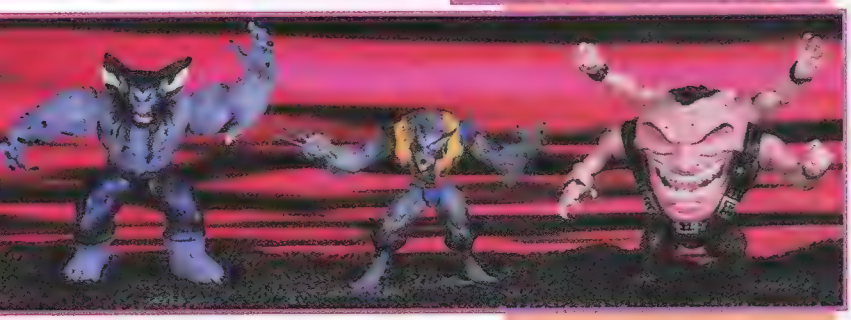
The most anticipated new line is, without a doubt, The Incredible Hulk. The initial assortment will contain six six-inch figures. Included in the bunch are Abomination with a squirting gamma-toxic ooze, Gray Hulk with a colossal Gatling gun, and the Leader with a gamma-attack module. Also featured are Savage Hulk with a break-through brick wall, She-Hulk with a crossbow, and Transforming Hulk. Chances are, the most popular figure will be Transforming Hulk, which is actually two figures—a Bruce Banner figure fits inside the larger Hulk. Suggested retail for the Hulk figures is $7.99 apiece.

OCTOBER AND BEYOND: MAKE WOLVIE'S SKELETON WHILE LOOKING FOR DAREDEVIL

The X-Men Weapon-X Lab playset will be released in October. Weapon-X Wolverine's Adamantium Skeleton can be created by pouring a specifically formulated adamantium alloid into a figure mold. The playset contains enough goop to make 10 translucent skeleton figures. Suggested retail price is $29.99.

Expect new Spider-Man and X-Men assortments to be released before Christmas. According to Toy Biz, a final determination as to which figures will be included has not yet been made. However, a Daredevil figure has been sculpted and is ready to go. "It's just a matter of finding an assortment to put him in," says a company spokesperson. W

Dan Albaugh is really scared that since Toy Biz is making a Ben Reilly action figure, it can't be long before they release a Seward Trainer one as well.



September's X-Men Mutant Monsters features (L to r.): Dark Beast, Werewolf Wolverine and Sugarman

WISH LIST

THE 10 ACTION FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

(AUGUST 96)

1) Amalgam (DC / Marvel)

The majority of our top 10 comes generously from one common theme: a call for Amalgam action figures. Top by Dark Horse, the most requested figures were Super Soldier (Spider-Man and Dr. Strange).

2) Princess Leia in Jabba's Slave Get-Up (Star Wars)

Who the heck was Kenner thinking, producing a Dark Leia figure before the one? Makes us wish we had a Jabba Anyhow, some-wicked Leia here would come with a whole, revolting furniture-and-all make, claw.

3) Mystique (X-Men)

Decked-out in her classic white outfit, complete with accessories and interchangeable pop-off heads to Rogue, Storm, Jean Grey and Psylocke.

4) Bane (Batman)

Designed by "King of the Action-Figure Designers" Kent Snyder, this one would bear no resemblance to the crappy Kenner TAS Bane. Lots of removable armor cables and MASK, a must-own figure.

5) Quicksilver (X-Men)

The standard molded on the Pizzaz would make a cool figure, but we'd make a great figure if we tossed in his swing, rocky pose and cool wind-up "running" leg feature.

6) Lock-Up (Batman)

The guy kicked him on the curb and now they've added him to the mainstream Batman mythos as well. We want Kenner, or Bob Sears to design the mold for the puppy, add a-mane and handcuffs, a stunning deluxe! and supervillain restainment cage, and he's made an awesome figure.

7) Ventriloquist (Batman)

How much fun would it be hanging up this fellow guy and his puppet? Regardless, the Joe Ventriloquist with removable "Scarface dummy" would make a cool.

8) Paradox (DC Heroes)

Though they should've just killed off Hal Jordan instead of turning him into Paradox, he'd still make a cool figure. His toy gimmick? Shiny green plastic like the Toy Biz Iron Man figures and light-up "machine-effect" like the Kenner Mandarin.

9) Reunion from Classic Trek (Star Trek)

Accessorized with a removable gold bird-of-prey and cool Romulan weapons, this Trek bad guy would be hot.

10) Kingdom Come (DC Heroes)

We've just started getting e-mails requesting Kingdom Come figures based on DC's traditional heroes (so far nobody wants any of the "new-breed" heroes). Most requested: Superman, followed by Batman (and his Bat-bots), Wonder Woman, Green Lantern and the Flash.

Hey!

Since we started this column several months ago, five figures we've listed that we want made are currently under production! Your vote can make a difference! Drop us a note at:

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Or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@aol.com.

scene

A guide to Japanese comics and animation

by Carl Gustav Horn

mtvnews: you heard it first

While many folks in the U.S. are just now starting to see anime and manga as a current fad, the surprising fact is that MTV's been letting Americans in on it for well over seven years.

Back in early 1989, before any of the anime companies that now dominate the U.S. market had made a single release, Kurt Loder did a three-minute report on anime and manga on "MTV News." In contrast to many contemporary mass-media stories, it didn't start by saying, "Unlike Disney, these 'toons are jam-packed with sex and violence," but was actually balanced and well informed.

"MTV News" spoke first in 1989 to Bill Sienkiewicz, who was doing the covers for *Lone Wolf and Cub* at the time, the first manga to be brought to the U.S. for a regular run. Sienkiewicz had explained, "One of the major differences between American comics and Japanese comics is that the form is much more widely accepted [in Japan], and there are more comics and varieties of comics for every persuasion: religious, age, sexual, political, corporate..." The report flashed images of a wide range of Japanese manga and anime titles, including some which would be released in the U.S. years later—*Iczer-1* (Antarctic), *Dirty Pair* (Viz), and *Star of the Kurds* (Dark Horse's *The Rebel Sword*), as well as those that were already out, such as the Viz/Eclipse releases *Mai the Psychic Girl*, *Area 88* and *Appleseed*. "MTV News" was recognizing early on that the secret to manga's success in Japan has not been fads or trends, but getting every segment of society interested in buying comics relevant to their own situation. The kind of amusing everyday-life stories which are consigned to the small press over here, are often best-sellers in Japan.

Appleseed was one of many manga spotlighted on an "MTV News" report some seven years ago

"Ninja Scroll" helped promote MTV's "Cartoon Sushi" animation premiere last year

The "MTV News" graphics showed the pill-popping, bike-thrashing protagonists of the other big-name English manga release at the time, Epic's *Akira*. Editor Archie Goodwin explained that, in Japan, the comic carried a politically radical charge, yet sold three million copies. The remark was reinforced with an excerpt from the trailer for the anime version of "Akira" which would hit the U.S. later that year: millions of MTV viewers who had just witnessed the televised massacre of the Beijing democracy movement were now suddenly assaulted by a "cartoon" out of Asia filled with Molotov cocktails and government firing squads. The report concluded with *Akira* creator Katsuhiro Otomo commenting on his preference for a realistic style. There was no doubt that, in three minutes, "MTV News" had made the point that the real shock value of anime and manga was the stylistic diversity and radical atmosphere that gave it creative strength.

Three years later, anime penetrated MTV's core, the music video itself, when Matthew Sweet used footage from the anime film "Space Adventure Cobra"—a tale of a cigar-chomping space adventurer packing the invincible "Psychogun" in his bionic arm—for his "Girlfriend" video. "Girlfriend" became a "Buzz Clip," and sales of Sweet's album of the same name as the video reached 300,000. The power to com-

SOUND BITES

"WE'RE YOUNG, WE'RE DYNAMIC. IF WE CAN BE WHAT VALIANT COMICS IS NOW IN A COUPLE OF YEARS, I'LL BE HAPPY."
—*Meloney Crawford Chadwick, Harris Comics (Wizard #22, June 1993)*

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bine anime with today's music had been demonstrated by MTV and would be followed up by KMFDM with the use of Manga Entertainment's "Patlabor" in the group's "Juke Joint Jezebel" video.

Since those videos, anime has accelerated its presence on the channel from something as simple as its appearance as the "video wallpaper" backdrop at last year's "MTV Music Video Awards," to the run of the '60s classic TV anime "Speed Racer," to "Liquid Television" 's sci-fi/horror anime film-short "Running Man" (part of Streamline's "Neo-Tokyo," originally known in Japan as "Meikyu Monogatari"), to the clips of Manga's "Patlabor" and "Ninja Scroll" that were used to promote last year's "Cartoon Sushi" animation premieres.

Anime's current incarnation on MTV is also a hot one, through its program "Squirt TV," a former New York public-access show starring 14-year-old Jake Fogelnest. The 10-second "bumpers" that begin and end the show's commercial breaks are actual excerpts from AnimEigo's subtitled version of "Urusei Yatsura." The show's producer at MTV, Ed Capuano, hopes to increase the length of the excerpts and possibly try other anime shows as well in "Squirt TV" 's second season, which began in May.

According to Greg Drebbin, VP for programming at MTV, the station is considering airing the "Akira" movie in its entirety, which would be the longest block of programming ever devoted by the channel to Japanese animation. But there's a problem. The very same clips of violence that were shown seven years ago on MTV in a news context would be considered too much as "entertainment" for a channel whose general policy is not to air anything completely unsuitable for those under 12. Ironically, of course, much of the violence in "Akira" is in a political context, and Drebbin's aware that the censored version—which has been prepared for them by Streamline—may suit their broadcast guidelines but may also seriously compromise the anime classic. "We understand, and we want to be true to the artist's integrity," he says. "If we can't deliver on that, we don't want to do it at all."

By approaching it from different angles over the years, MTV has helped to ease anime to the cultural palette of young Americans in general, and helped them think of the medium as something dynamic and varied rather than just a passing fad. It's MTV's respect for anime as an equal element in the station's diverse world of progressive entertainment that favors an interesting future for Japanese animation on MTV. **W**

Carl Gustav Horn just loves the movie "Gung Ho," especially the part where the father yells, "No more Twisted Sister! No more MTV!"

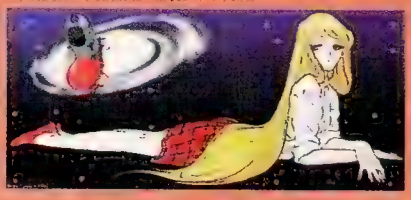
picks of the month

manga

Star Blazers: The Magazine of Space Battleship Yamato

(Argo Press, $2.95, bimonthly, color, 32 pgs.)

Before "Robotech" hit the airwaves in 1985, there was an entire generation that got into anime through TV's "Star Blazers," an English-language adaptation of "Space Battleship Yamato." This epic, future saga centers on the crew of a WWII battleship that is reconditioned as a spacecraft in a last-ditch mission to save the human race from the Gamilon Empire. For those who remember those days, and for those now discovering the classic series on video from Voyager Entertainment, this is THE magazine. Each issue contains a 24-page, full-color *Star Blazers* manga, plus an eight-page section entitled "Analyzer" containing interviews and information related to both "Star Blazers" and the original Japanese "Yamato." Issue #6 included the beginning of the three-part "Icarus" by artist/writer Bruce Lewis (*Robotech—Invid War: Aftermath, Gall Force*), as well as such historical features as "Twilight: The True Story of Battleship Yamato."

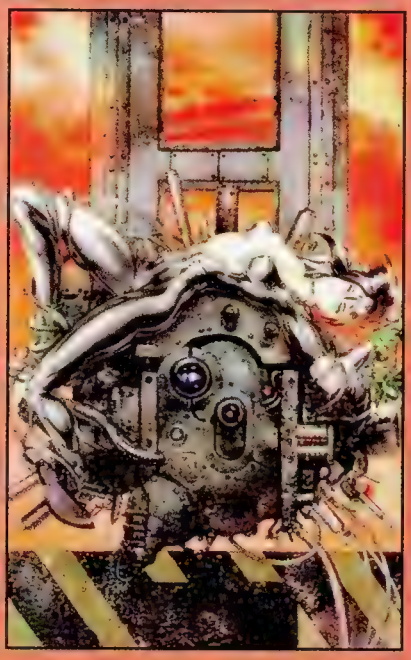


video

Ghost in the Shell

(Manga Entertainment, dubbed/subtitled, 90 minutes, $19.95/$29.95)

You couldn't ask for better cyberpunk than this movie. While "Ghost" has the spectacular, sprawling, towering cityscape of a "Blade Runner" or "Akira" (yet in its own style), and the futuristic weaponry of both films (such as suitcases with pop-out submachine guns and custom-built tank-killer rifles), it also contains and explores the vital cyberpunk element of the mind-link with computer systems and the hacking of same, which both of the previous films lacked. The story centers on the members of a secret government dirty-jobs squad who pursue an infamous hacker. But they soon stumble on a consequence of the Net far bigger than the politicians and corporations who fight over it. And since "Ghost in the Shell" is directed by the most progressive film-maker in anime today, Mamoru Oshii, and based on the manga by superstar Masamune Shirow, it's certainly more thought-provoking than either of those previous cinematic forays into this genre.



SOUND BITES

"ALAN [MOORE]'S RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THIS, WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT."
—DC Group Editor Karen Berger on the creation of Vertigo (Wizard #23, July 1993)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

Ani-Mayhem
A-M in America...the Rising Sun hits card games
July 1996 from Pioneer
ACTUAL SCREEN ART.
Bubble Gum Crisis,
Ranma 1/2, Techni Muyo! and
El Hazard: The Magnificent World.
Ready to play out of the box!
1st game designed
for solitaire play.
Look for rare cards
in Anime videos
Ani-Mayhem™ and © 1995 Pioneer Entertainment (USA) L.P., all rights reserved.
Ani-Mayhem developed by AnimeCafe, Inc. "Tenchi Muyo" © 1992 AIC • Pioneer LDC, Inc.
"El Hazard" © 1995 AIC • Pioneer LDC, Inc. "Bubblegum Crisis" copyright Artmic, Inc.
and Youmex, Inc. 1987-1990, all rights reserved.
English subtitled/dubbed versions, copyright AnimEigo, Inc.©1991-1995, all rights reserved. "Ranma
1/2" © Rumiko Takahashi/Shogakukan Inc./Kitty/Fuji TV.
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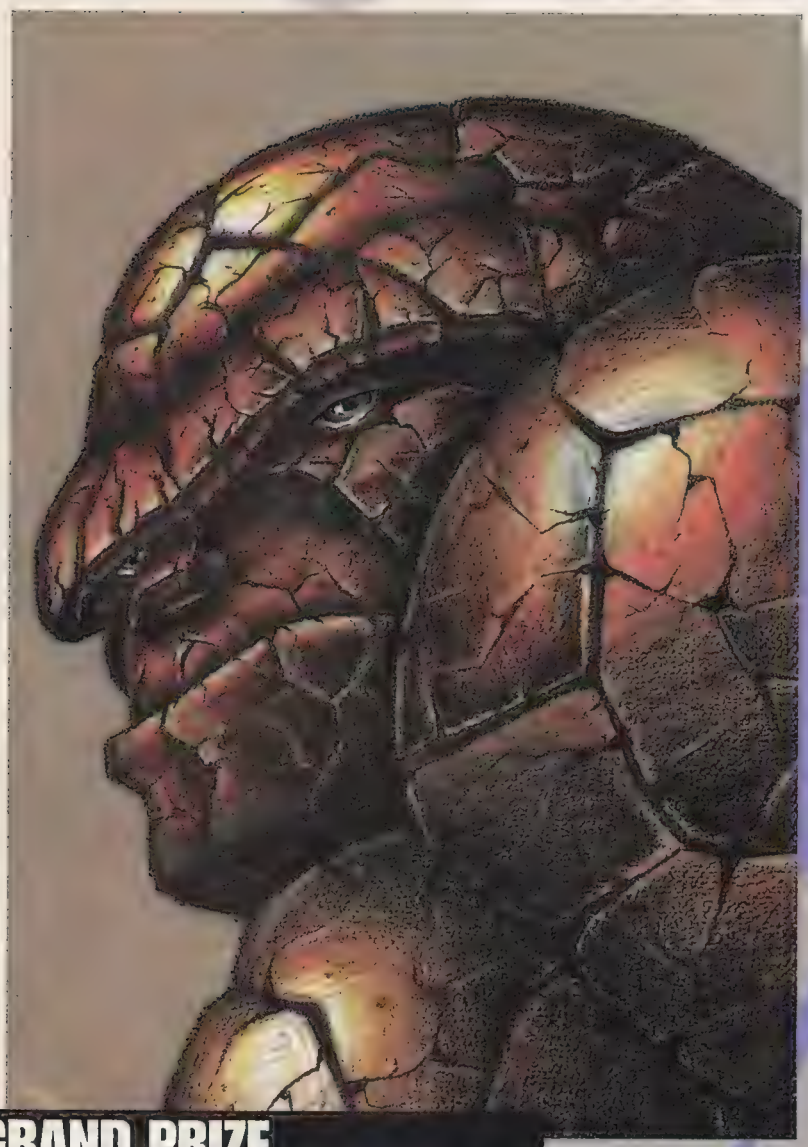
PANIME
PIONEER
The Art of Entertainment

DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The four folks whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive an *Incredible Hulk* #426 signed by Peter David and a *Prime* #2 signed by Kevin West. Each of the three runners-up scores an *X-Files Special Edition* #1 signed by Stefan Petrucha, a *Punisher* #1 signed by Tom Lyle and a *Super Soldier* #1 signed by Mark Waid. The Grand Prize winner scores all those goodies plus a piece of original *Underworld Unleashed* art by Howard Porter, generously donated by Porter himself—thanks very much, guy! Congratulations, everyone!



GRAND PRIZE

THE THING **Juan Díaz** Miami, FL

THE ARTIST

JUAN DIAZ

THE BOOTY

SOUND BITES

"EACH TIME I DREW HIM, THE SMILE GOT BIGGER, THE EYES GOT BIGGER, THE FANGS GOT BIGGER, AND THE SLOB GOT SLOBBIER. THE KIDS LIKE HIM."
—*Todd McFarlane on Venom (Wizard #11, July 1992)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

RUNNERS-UP

SPIDER-MAN/BATMAN James Gibson Somerset, KY

G-FORCE Eric Gonzalez Lutz, FL

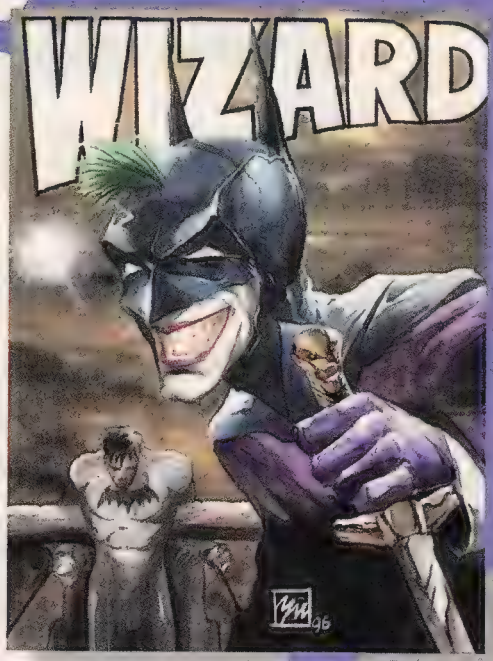
EARTHWORM SPAWN William Borde Los Angeles, CA

THE DEMON
Ben Glendenning
Mesa, AZ

BAT ALBERT
Joshua P. Stroder
Salem, OR

HELLBOY
William Elder-Groebe
Fairfax, CA

THE JOKER VS. BATMAN
Leinil Yu
Manila, Philippines



Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Entries can be e-mailed to WizardTGTC@aol.com. (Please use an EPS or TIFF format @ 300 dpi.). And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, along with the piece's title/description, and mail it flat to avoid damage. If you do not write your full name, address and telephone number on the back of your entry, it will be disqualified. All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

SOUND BITES

"I SAW A 10-INCH PUNISHER."
—Wizard *Assistant Price Guide Editor Phil Colligan on what we hope is Toy Biz's 10-inch action figure line*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

BY JOYCE M. STEEL

Bubble Gum Returns!

Fleer/SkyBox is bringing back the '70s chewing sensation in its *The Adventures of Batman and Robin Action Packs* this July. But we ain't talkin' the ordinary jawbreaking gum of days gone by. This gum will have four different designs featuring Batman, Robin, Two-Face and the Riddler printed on it in edible ink!

Of course, when you rush out to buy this great gum, you'll find it comes with cards too (what a deal!). The interactive 36-card series, based on FOX's animated "The Adventures of Batman & Robin," consists of 12 game cards (two per pack), 12 "Pop-Outs" (two per pack), six coloring cards (one per pack) and six puzzle cards (one per pack) to test your coordination skills (six cards per pack, suggested retail 99 cents).

MOVIE MANIA

Behind every great movie (and the not-so-great ones) awaits a card series...and Topps is one of a number of card manufacturers counting on that this July, with the debut of its *Independence Day Widevision* cards. The 72-card series features stills from the 20th Century Fox action flick starring Will Smith, Bill Pullman and Jeff Goldblum, in which a deadly alien force invades Earth. Six Prismatic Foil cards (1:9 packs) chase the series (six cards per pack, suggested retail $1).

Donruss, the company that recently unloaded its sports card division to Pinnacle in order to concentrate on entertainment/non-sport cards, leaps faithfully into the movie card business this summer!

The first of two sets slated for a July release is *Kazam Trading Cards*, based on the sort of Aladdin-in-the-'Hood flick starring Shaquille O'Neal as a genie whose 12-year-old master finds him in a boombox while trying to hide from a gang. The 90-carder features 63 story cards, 25 interactive cards and two checklists, along with nine foil-embossed chase cards (1:9 packs) in the hobby version (10 cards per pack, suggested retail $1.25).

"Joe's Apartment," a flick based on the funky MTV short, features a few hundred singing and dancing cockroaches that foil an evil landlord's heinous plot and patch up Joe's love life. The 90-card Donruss series consists of 72 story cards, nine character cards, seven roach cards, two checklists and nine tattoos (seven cards and one tattoo per pack, suggested retail 99 cents).

And if that's not enough for you movie buffs, try InkWorks' 90-card *Pinocchio* set this July, an interactive series filled with movie, behind-the-scenes, activity and puzzle cards based on the live-action film starring Jonathan Taylor Thomas. Chase cards include nine Puzzleworks cards (1:7 packs), three Foilworks cards (1:35 packs) and two Lenticularworks cards (1:72 packs) for your moving pleasure (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.29).

MISCELLANEOUS QUICKIES:

• FPG offers *The Best of Ken Kelly* in a 90-metallic card series packing more than 25 images never before seen as cards, and six gold metallic chase cards.

• A 90-card *Avengelyne 2 Chromium* series is coming from WildStorm in July, chased by nine motion cards and a "Morph" card.

• Comic Images debuts its 24 pt. stock format in two 90-carders: *Animal Mystic* is Dark One's first card series, and *Bone: Dragonslayer* brings more cool stuff to fans of Jeff Smith's comic.

• Collect-a-Card picked up the McDonald's license and is releasing its first series, *The Adventures of Ronald McDonald: McDonaldland 500 Fun Cards*, in July. The 50-card series ships in July (seven cards and one puzzle piece per pack, suggested retail 79 cents), and a pricier "nostalgia" series of sets will begin shipping early next year. W

Joyce M. Steel eats cards for breakfast. Without milk, of course, 'cause then they'd be all soggy.

"Must...huff...outrun... giant...pant...Bat...frisbee." Skybox's *Batman and Robin Action Packs*.

"Hey, Carl...what if this gig gets Raided? Heh heh. Get it?" "Shut up, Louie." Donruss' *Joe's Apartement*.

InQuest presents HIT THE DECK

The latest in collectible card game news

• Tired of traveling to tourney's halfway across the world just to up your *Magic: The Gathering* standing? Well, just step into the **Arena** and your troubles will be solved. In August, at selected stores in selected cities, WotC will be launching Arena, a new type of *Magic* league that can be played outside of sanctioned tournament sites. With this new system, players can qualify for championship tourneys like the *Magic* Pro Tour at their local stores. Arena will have standardized formats of play, a national ranking system and unique prizes for everyone who joins. Currently, this new type of system is being tested in Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia, Wash., with formats including sealed deck, Type II and continuous draft. If you want in on the fun, drop an e-mail to WotC at league@wizards.com or visit the website at http://www.wizards.com/Arena.

• What's the latest in delays? Glad you asked. The ***Killer Instinct*** CCG will be making its debut in June, instead of April, to wait for the Nintendo 64 video game release. ***Knights of the Isle***, *Quest for the Grail*'s first expansion, will also be delayed till June. *Fantasy Adventures*' expansion, ***Wheel of Time*** has been rolled back till late summer to coincide with the release of the new Robert Jordan book. And ***Q-Continuum***, the *Star Trek: TNG* CCG, won't be warping to your stores until August. ■ *Mike Fasolo*

Mike Fasolo is the research assistant of Wizard's sister mag InQuest, the all-around grooviest guide to collectible card games.

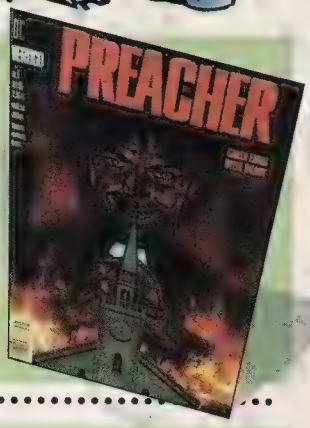
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are June's hottest back issues.**

TOP 10 COMICS

1. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis ARTIST: Steve Dillon

Give me that old-time religion! Y'know, that "fire and brimstone" and "repent ye or burn for all eternity" kind of stuff. Hey, damnation sells. This must be true, 'cuz *Preacher* #1 is the numero uno-selling back issue. How can it lose? You get a decapitated angel, a grungy British vampire, a church full of fried corpses, a hard-drinking preacher possessed by the love child of an angel and a demon, and lots of blood. *Preacher* is not only more violent than a Sam Peckinpaw movie (and we do like our violence), but with its unique combination of humor, horror and body parts, it has been selling like the proverbial hotcakes. And if you wanna talk about scary, this issue introduces the Patron Saint of Killers, slaughtering his way across Texas. Y'know, I don't seem to remember learning about the Patron Saint of Killers in Sunday School.



2. HITMAN #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis ARTIST: John McCrea

Listen. You wanna know a secret? If you ever get in a fight with Batman, don't vomit on him. It really pisses him off and he'll punch you real hard. How do I know this? I read *Hitman* #1. Remember the "Bloodlines" storyline that ran through all the DC annuals a couple years back? Well, the coolest thing to come out of it was Hitman. He's a meta-assassin with a conscience: He only kills superpowered bad guys. Yeah, what a novelty. Anyway, not only does this comic have the popular dark and gritty art, but like *Preacher*, it's written by the one guy who probably had a worse childhood than Jeffrey Dahmer, Garth Ennis. Ennis and John McCrea put together a fun and bloody series that takes the dark humor of the Vertigo books and puts it smack-dab in the middle of the DC Universe. DC heroes, watch out!

3. WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: D. Wohl, B. Haberlin and M. Turner
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

Here's the scoop: Undercover cop Sara Pezzini (dressed in the smallest dress we've ever seen) jumps in front of her partner when he's about to get mowed down, and Ka-pow!, she takes a fair share of slugs herself. As Pezzini lays dying, the H.R. Geiger-lookin' Witchblade (some mysterious magical artifact that some bad guys were messin' with) bonds (or something) with her, granting her all sorts of weird magical powers and stuff. Now Sara can form body-armor over her entire body (er, except her chest—this book does have to sell, after all), shoot flesh-melting fireballs, spin a web any size, the whole nine yards.

NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. WITCHBLADE #2

WRITERS: D. Wohl, B. Haberlin and M. Turner
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

In possession of what appears to be the two things you need to make a hot comic nowadays, Sara Pezzini, the modern-day Witchblade, has planted her feet firmly in the Top 10. With the *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade* mini-series (written by the ever-popular Garth Ennis fella) and the upcoming *Tales of the Witchblade* series (chronicling the other people who have worn the Witchblade) adding fuel to her fire, it appears that *Witchblade* will be the top-biller in Top Cow's increasingly popular stable of comics. Heed our words: Top Cow is a studio to watch over the next few years!

SOUND BITES

"THIS ISN'T A TREND OR FAD. LET'S RECOGNIZE IT FOR WHAT IT IS: A GENRE."
—*Brian Pulido on Bad Girls* (Wizard Bad Girls Special, *1996*)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

NUMBER FIVE

5. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

For the last couple of years one of coolest shows on television has been "The X-Files." Who'd've thunk the comic series would prove to be just as popular? It now seems the premier issue is just as hard to find as the Lucia Prophecy is in that very first issue. Fortunately, reading this issue will not cause most of you to be vaporized or to commit suicide. With its eerie plot-lines and mysterious conspiracies, many comic geeks out there are buying up this book—nothing strange or unexpected about that.

6. WOLVERINE #100

WRITER: Larry Hama
ARTISTS: Adam Kubert and Dan Green

Zoinks! When was the last time Wolverine's been in the Top 10? Or Marvel, for that matter? It's been a few months, either way. Well, guess what...Wolvie's feral again. And what everybody thought was gonna happen—his regaining his adamantium—didn't happen at all. Instead, he went totally wild and physically regressed. But if Wolverine's now more feral, wouldn't his senses be even more heightened? And if they were, wouldn't his nose get bigger and not smaller? His nose is practically non-existent! But the issue's so darn good, I'll stop picking on his nose.

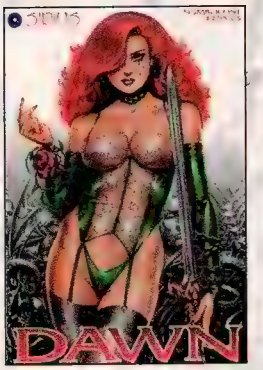
NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

7. LADY DEATH IN LINGERIE #1

WRITER: None
ARTISTS: Various

Does Lady Death look kinda like Farrah Fawcett or what? Okay, so maybe Farrah had a nice, healthy tan, and two pupils, and rarely grimaced menacingly on "Charlie's Angels." But Ms. Death definitely has Farrah's hair! And if you wanna see more LD in all her Farrah-esque glory, you gotta check out *Lady Death in Lingerie*. A veritable plethora of top-name artists have contributed to make this one of the breast...I mean *best* collection of pin-ups in years!



NUMBER EIGHT

8. DAWN #1

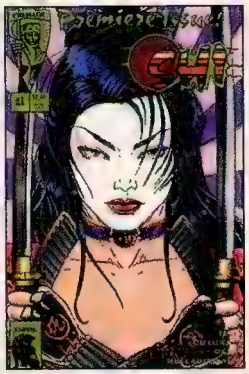
WRITER: Joseph Michael Linsner
ARTIST: Joseph Michael Linsner

Within this month's Top 10 are five beautiful, scantily clad women that have been known to wield long, stiff, pointy swords. Is it me, or do all these Bad Girls have a bad case of penis envy? And what about the tall, vertical, phallic-like cathedral that points straight to Heaven in *Dawn #1*? Could be! Well, we're sure of one thing—that *Dawn* is one hot commodity with fans. Linsner's beautiful art has made this issue more rare than a rap gangsta in Dickinson, N.D.

9. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Barry Orkin

Y'know, everybody loves a clown, but they'll ironically kill a mime if one comes within 10 feet of 'em. Well, although Shi wears the white make-up, she also talks, so that'd put her in the clown phylum. That may be why this heroine is such a smash hit with collectors. That and the fact the "Tooch" and the "Gut" write one mean story of a martial arts master caught between two cultures. What would you do if you moved from conservative and traditional Japan to the center of all comic book universes, New York City? Fight crime, natch! And we'll keep watching Shi do just that—'cause the art's top-notch too.



NUMBER NINE

10. ANGELA #1

WRITER: Neil Gaiman
ARTIST: Greg Capullo

Butt-kicking Angela is back, and she's on trial for treason and for hunting the endangered Sandalphon Dragons without a license. Suffice it to say, Neil Gaiman writes a great story and Greg Capullo's art is as prolific as ever. This busty, thong-wearing, dragon-hunting, big-haired angel is just as hugely popular now as she was when she made her debut in the pages of *Spawn*. And talk about your endangered species—just try and find a copy of this issue. When this major babe's long-awaited series comes out, we see her slicing up the charts with gusto. W

NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. GEN[13] #1 (REGULAR) IMAGE
12. SPAWN #1 IMAGE
13. DC VERSUS MARVEL #1 DC/MARVEL
14. SPAWN #9 IMAGE
15. LEGENDS...DARK CLAW #1 MARVEL/DC
16. THE X-FILES #2 TOPPS
17. AVENGELYNE #1 MAXIMUM
18. LADY DEATH #1 CHAOS!
19. MARVEL VERSUS DC #2 MARVEL/DC
20. WOLVERINE #75 MARVEL

Joseph Koch's Avalanche of Wonder Presents...

The 1,001 Comics Contest!

How'd you like to lay your fanboy paws on 1,001 comics? Just think of the possibilities! Imagine the fun! Sorting! Stacking! Rolling them into tubes and smacking your little brother upside the head with them! Heck, you might even want to read a few.

Well, you can get your grubby little hands on a veritable avalanche of wonder—1,001 comics, including a few rather valuable ones—if your research abilities are good enough.

How To Play

Just answer these 10 questions. Oh, these aren't just any old easy trivia questions. No siree, Bob. You have to *work* for this one.

We want you to use your research skills to get these answers, which can easily be found in the comics listed. Get out those comics and search! Don't have the issues? Check out a friend's. Go to the local comic store and look 'em up. Find reprints. Go to the library. Just find 'em!

1. In *Uncanny X-Men* #129, Wolverine is standing in front of a magazine rack reading a magazine. What is the mag's title?
2. In which unlikely place do Spider-Man and Captain America meet in *Marvel Team-Up* #128?
3. Tony Stark beats alcoholism by capping a bottle of whiskey in *Iron Man* #128. What's the brand of whiskey?
4. Who is being beaten by a group of Springfield Elementary students at the beginning of *Simpsons Comics* #13?
5. According to the highway sign, how many miles from Las Vegas is Lex Luthor when he returns to Earth in *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #3?
6. Which Russian novel do Black Canary and Blue Beetle discuss in *Justice League* #3?
7. What is Martha Washington's serial number, as shown on her dog tags in *Give Me Liberty* #1?
8. What is the first song Foxglove sings at the club in *Death: The High Cost of Living* #2?
9. What food is Wonder Woman eating on page five of *Wonder Woman* (vol. 2) #65?
10. What is the year, make and model of the car Jon Sable and Myke Blackmon drive in *Jon Sable, Freelance* #22?

Grand Prize (1):

One lucky winner (randomly drawn from among all entries who get all 10 questions right) gets all 1,001 comics, including:

- *Amazing Spider-Man* #23, featuring the Green Goblin!
- *Comico Primer* #2, the first appearance of Grendel!
- *Marvel Super-Heroes* #18, the first appearance of the Guardians of the Galaxy!
- Plus, tons of copies of *Wolverine, Uncanny X-Men, Spawn, Lady Death, Batman* and whatever else we can get *our* fanboy paws on!

Legal Research

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Joseph Koch's Avalanche of Wonder and their immediate families or Lucien the Librarian. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach your answers. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: 1,001 Comics Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize will be offered. Prize is awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Hey! Does Wolverine's mom know he's reading that magazine? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by August 30, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected by random drawing among all correct entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on September 15, 1996.

For the name of the winner, available after September 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: 1,001 Comics Winner, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this sucker out (Don't forget to answer the questions!), put it in an envelope and send it off to: 1,001 Comics Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.
Deadline is August 30, 1996.

This month's contest is sponsored by Joseph Koch's Avalanche of Wonder. For a catalogue of 150+ tabloid sized pages of comics Golden Age to current, plus movie, monster and fantasy magazines, fanzines and foreign comics (with over 200,000 different listings), send $3.00 to:
Joseph Koch
206 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11232
718-768-8571
Fax: 718-768-8918

1,001 Comics Entry Form

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4. _____ 9. _____
5. _____ 10. _____

by Jon Warren

KINGDOM COME RULES!

The big news this month is *Kingdom Come*! Even though the first issue has just hit the stands, it's showing up on many retailers' Top 10 lists, usually in first place. Expectations were high to begin with, the sales of the first issue far exceeded expectations and, for once, this comic seems worth all the hype.

For those on another planet the past few months, *Kingdom Come* is about the effect of superheroes on ordinary people when they *stop* being heroes. Expect all the issues to be extraordinarily collectable, and to begin increasing in value immediately. Look for a lot of interest in the Alex Ross-painted posters, T-shirts and other merchandising items.

ONSLAUGHT MARCHES ON

"Onslaught" is the watchword on the Marvel side, and fans just can't wait to see how this world-changing confrontation between Professor X (Or *is* it the prof?) and the other superheroes will turn out. Congrats to Marvel for including an "Onslaught timeline" in the current X-titles to clue us in on previous Onslaught teasers we may have missed, and help us find issues we need for a complete "Onslaught" storyline. This is certainly proving to be the biggest thing this summer, and now is the time to get hold of these first Onslaught appearances! Reward: I'll send a cool *Wizard* gold card to the first person to tell me where the first appearance of Onslaught is (not Xavier, but Onnie himself), and *prove* it (with photocopies). (Hint: it's not in *Uncanny X-Men*.) Send answers to the address in the "Market Watchers" section.

SCOOPS OF THE MONTH!

Dave Braunstein of Eldorado Comics in Mount Laurel, N.J., gave us some great tips to pass

The Quick List — What's Hot in the Comic Book Market

BATMAN BLACK & WHITE—The variety of artists, writers and storytelling styles make this book a beautiful winner! Looks as if the freedom of producing work without color has inspired creators to really let loose for some of the finest Batman stories in a long time. DC wouldn't go wrong by making this a regular gig.

CAPTAIN AMERICA—Thanks to the exciting storylines of Mark Waid and cool, clean-jawed art by Ron Garney, *Cap* is once again one of Marvel's hottest titles.

GEN[13]—It's coming back up in popularity and in back-issue prices, thanks to new storylines, special issues and a new mini-series by Adam Hughes.

GHOST—Typical of most Dark Horse product, *Ghost*'s low-key but splendidly drawn adventures are starting to catch on, and back issues are becoming sought-after.

HITMAN—He's getting hotter month after month, and the presence of Batman and the Joker in issues #2 and #3 should make these really smokin' items in the future.

LADY DEATH—She's not the original Bad Girl, nor the most original, but Lady Death keeps hanging in there (sometimes literally!).

PREACHER—One fan described this book as the comic equivalent of "Pulp Fiction." True, but it's more than that. Writer Garth Ennis truly loves stirring things up in this unique blend of mystery, horror and human sexuality. Steve Dillon's wild art adds to the thrills, with his super depictions of the characters' expressions and body language.

SPAWN—Issues #1 and #9 are perennial favorites, but any given issue is always worth picking up, despite complaints that McFarlane isn't involved enough. Also red-hot: *Medieval Spawn/Witchblade*.

WOLVERINE—Although #100 is the hottest, other issues of this title are hot too, especially #75 and #95-#99.

THE X-FILES—Despite an erratic publishing schedule (three issues, #13-#15, appeared in less than two weeks in some stores), *X-Files* is still hot, and so is the TV show. A season-ending cliffhanger may help build fans' appetites for the agents over the summer.

SOUND BITES

"IF WE'RE GOING TO DO A CRAPPY ISSUE, WE PROMISE TO SOLICIT IT THAT WAY IN ADVANCE."
—Ash's *Jimmy Palmiotti (Wizard #37, September 1994)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

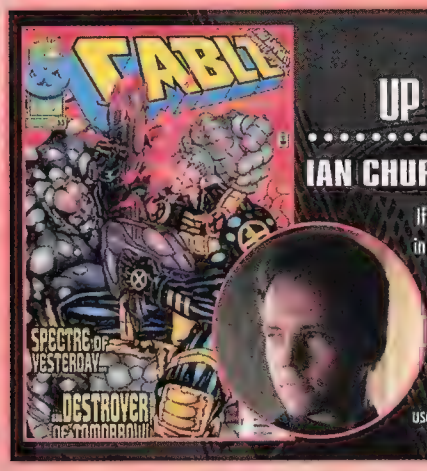
WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST WRITERS

1. **Peter David** — *Hulk, Aquaman*
2. **Neil Gaiman** — *Sandman*
3. **Mark Waid** — *Captain America, X-Men*
4. **Garth Ennis** — *Preacher, Hitman*
5. **Kurt Busiek** — *Astro City*
6. **Karl Kesel** — *Daredevil, S'boy and the Ravers*
7. **James Robinson** — *Starman*
8. **Ron Marz** — *Green Lantern*
9. **Scott Lobdell** — *Generation X, Uncanny X-Men*
10. **Chuck Dixon** — *Robin, Detective Comics*

WIZARD'S TOP 10 HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. **Todd McFarlane** — *Spawn*
2. **Joe Madureira** — *Uncanny X-Men*
3. **Jim Lee** — upcoming: *Fantastic Four*
4. **J. Scott Campbell** — *Gen*
5. **Alex Ross** — *Kingdom Come*
6. **Billy Tucci** — *Shi*
7. **Joe Linsner** — *Dawn*
8. **Joe Quesada** — *Ash*; upcoming: *Azrael/Ash*
9. **Adam Kubert** — *Wolverine, X-Men: Onslaught*
10. **Greg Capullo** — *Spawn*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.



WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR

IAN CHURCHILL

If you went nuts over Churchill's explosive Onslaught poster in *Wizard* #58, you'll be glad to know that this British native puts the same intensity into *Cable* each month. The penciler's solid, clean style and dramatic pacing are perfect for the mutant's adventures, and his excellent emotional displays play well off his whirlwind action scenes throughout each story. This highly expressive storyteller also knows when to use large panels to add to an issue's excitement.

on to *Wizard* readers:

Marvel Team-Up #53 is the first John Byrne work on X-Men characters, not *Iron Fist* #15; the first appearance of Hepcats is in *Cerebus Bi-Weekly* #17; and last but not least, the *Greed* (10/88) one-shot has a Milk & Cheese story pre-dating *Cerebus Bi-Weekly* #20! Can anyone send us photocopies of this issue?

WOLVIE'S HOT!

And he just keeps going up and up and up! We're talkin' about *Wolverine* #100 here, of course. There hasn't been a book like this in a long time. A great issue to further tease fans, this one jump-started the new feral version of our favorite Canadian mutant. No wonder it has become one of the hottest books around, and it looks like it's going to stay that way! Best of all, it's still affordable. Now *there's* a combination no real collector can afford to miss!

CHILLIN' WITH AMALGAM

Amalgam titles are cooling off a bit (except for *Legends of the Dark Claw*, which is still red-hot, along with the slow-starting but now blazing *X-Patrol*). Why? Probably due to the silence from DC and Marvel concerning any new Amalgam adventures. One-shot issues just don't stay hot; collectors want a series to collect! Get the message, Marvel and DC?

MINE THAT SILVER!

Silver Age comics are worth looking into now. More and more collectors are looking to Silver Age books, and what they're discovering is an amazing range of genres. Believe it or not, super-hero comics made up only a small percentage of the types of comics published in the '50s and early '60s. Teen stories, cartoon characters,

MARKET WATCHERS

Letters to the Price Guide

Q: I want to know whether or not being a Direct Sales or newsstand edition makes any difference in a comic book's value.

Stuart Brewster
Kirkland, WA

A: As the vast majority of comics are exactly the same except for the presence or absence of the UPC code (some publishers leave it on and print "Direct Edition" near it; others put artwork in its place on direct editions), both editions are considered equal for pricing and collecting purposes. But there are still a few collectors out there who insist upon having both.

Q: What's the best way to store comics to avoid such things as spine rolls, creases, etc.?

Paul Rademacher
Cannon Falls, MN

A: Most experts agree the absolute best way to store comics is in mylar bags of the proper size, supported by acid-free backing boards, which are slipped into the bag behind the book. If you tape your bags shut, it is recommended you replace the tape every five or so years (we've heard stories of tape glue eating through the bag and board over an extended period of time—so it never hurts to be safe). The books should be kept in comic-size file boxes or sleeves, standing up on end, preferably on a bookshelf. Store books inside your home (not in the garage basement or attic), in an area with good ventilation and away from direct sunlight.

Q: Why don't you separate the price guide by major companies, with the biggest having their own sections, and the rest under an independent section?

Brendan Walsh
Chicago, IL

A: Sorry—alphabetical listings are the easiest for collectors to use, and that's what we'll stick with.

Q: I have a *Spawn* #1 that's misprinted in some ways. The black, white and green Spawn emblem is missing some major ink spots, and the first few pages are about one inch too long on the lower right-hand corners. Does that hurt or help in any way?

Jogrindra Siewrattan
Margate, FL

A: It is rarity and physical condition which matters most in judging a book's value, while printing quality is usually considered only if it affects the readability. The flaws you mention should deduct about 10 percent from the guide price value.

Q: I was wondering if it matters what shape the packaging for toys is in. I'm a big-time McFarlane Toys collector, and some of the packages have some nicks and dents. Does this take down the value?

Jesse Summers
Conneaut Lake, PA

A: It depends. If the toys or action figures are old, such as original Star Wars figures, merely intact packaging can make them very valuable. If you're talking about contemporary action figures, like the McFarlane stuff, then flaw-free packaging is a must for a Mint value to be maintained.

Q: I was wondering if any of your *Wizard* mini-comics appear in any of the other price guides.

Herbert Fair
Brooklyn, NY

A: There are *other* price guides?

Thanks for your questions, everyone—see you next time!

—Jon Warren
Currently Avoiding Montana

Got questions? Send 'em to:
Market Watchers
c/o Jon Warren
P. O. Box 2512
Chattanooga, TN 37409
Or send e-mail directly to the guy himself:
JonRWarren@aol.com

romances, westerns, monsters, movie and TV adaptations, science fiction and fantasy, funny animals, classic literature, humor books and more showed up each month next to the superhero offerings. Most of these are still excellent investments, and good reading, besides!

TALKIN' 'BOUT THEM BAD GIRLS

Bad Girl books aren't quite as hot in some areas as they once were; just too many of 'em are around right now. The only new title doing really well is *Witchblade*—on the strength of an involving storyline, readers tell us, and not just her physical attributes. A word to the wise for any other publishers who think that bigger boobs mean stronger sales.

HELP YOUR RETAILER

Two ways you can do your local comic shop a favor:

1.) If you're into collectible card games, buy your supplies from your comics retailer. He can order anything you want (even "hard-to-find" items) in advance, just like he does your comics.

2.) Try something different once or twice a month. Pick up a new title or try a different company or buy a small press book. You might be surprised by something really good, and your retailer makes a few extra pennies. If every fan did this, we'd also have a healthy variety of books to choose from. **W**

Onslaught is really Jon Warren, whose lesser-known herald Stephen Shamus makes dinner reservations for him.

SOUND BITES
"IF WE CAN'T LAUNCH THESE CHARECTERS AND MAKE THEM WORK, THEN WE'RE GOING TO HAVE AN INDUSTRY FULL OF VIGILANTIES AND HALF-NAKED WOMEN"
—Rob Liefeld on "Unfinished Business" with Marvel (Wizard #57, May 1996)
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

WIZARD TOP 100

Spawn #50

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of MAY.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for May. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books (listed in **boldface type**). **(CE=Collector's Edition)**

1. **Spawn #50 (Image)**
2. X-Men #34 (Marvel)
3. Uncanny X-Men #334 (Marvel)
4. Wolverine #103 (Marvel)
5. **X-Man #17 (Marvel)**
6. **Kingdom Come #1 (DC)**
7. Gen[13] #11 (Image)
8. Cable #33 (Marvel)
9. Generation X #17 (Marvel)
10. Medieval Spawn/Witchblade #2 (Image)
11. X-Force #56 (Marvel)
12. X-Factor #124 (Marvel)
13. Excalibur #99 (Marvel)
14. **Avengers #400 (Marvel)**
15. Amazing Spider-Man #413 (Marvel)
16. The F. Adv's. of Cyclops & Phoenix #2 (Mar.)
17. **The X-Files #0 (Topps)**
18. Spider-Man #70 (Marvel)
19. **Star Wars: S. of the Empire #1 (D. H.)**
20. The X-Files #18 (Topps)
21. Sensational Spider-Man #6 (Marvel)
22. Spectacular Spider-Man #236 (Marvel)
23. Lady Death: The Odyssey #3 (Chaos!)
24. Batman #532 CE (DC)
25. Shi #9 (Crusade)
26. **Thor #500 (Marvel)**
27. Witchblade #6 (Image)
28. Incredible Hulk #443 (Marvel)
29. Fantastic Four #414 (Marvel)
30. WildC.A.T.s #30 (Image)
31. **Pitt #11 (Full Bleed)**
32. Detective Comics #698 (DC)
33. Superman #113 (DC)
34. Action Comics #723 (DC)
35. Detective Comics #699 (DC)
36. Adventures of Superman #536 (DC)
37. Superman: The Man of Steel #58 (DC)
38. **Batman Black & White #2 (DC)**
39. Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #5 (DC)
40. Captain America #453 (Marvel)
41. **Batman Annual #20 (DC)**
42. Batman: Leg. of the Dark Knight #84 (DC)
43. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #52 (DC)
44. WetWorks #17 (Image)
45. The Dreaming #2 (DC)
46. **Adventures of Superman Annual #8 (DC)**
47. Robin #31 (DC)
48. Fire From Heaven #2 (Image)
49. Celestine #1 (Image)
50. Sin City: That Yellow Bastard #4 (Dark Horse)
51. What If? #87 (Marvel)
52. Green Lantern #75 (DC)
53. **Ash: The Fire Within #1 (Event)**
54. X-Nation #5 (Marvel)
55. Green Lantern #76 (DC)
56. Catwoman #35 (DC)
57. Batman Chronicles #5 (DC)
58. X-Men 2099 #34 (Marvel)
59. **Atomik Angels #1 (Crusade)**
60. Cyberforce #23 (Image)
61. Azrael #19 (DC)
62. Cyberforce #24 (Image)
63. Avengelyne #2 (Maximum)
64. S. Wars: X-Wing—R.S.: P. Affair #4 (D. H.)
65. Flash #115 (DC)
66. Wonder Woman #111 (DC)
67. The Night Man/Gambit #3 (Marvel)
68. Venom: The Hunted #3 (Marvel)
69. Professor X and the X-Men #9 (Marvel)
70. **Catwoman Annual #3 (DC)**
71. Backlash #20 (Image)
72. The Maxx #24 (Image)
73. Iron Man #330 (Marvel)
74. Preacher #15 (DC)
75. Weapon Zero #4 (Image)
76. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #11 (Marvel)
77. Superboy #29 (DC)
78. Deathblow #28 (Image)
79. StormWatch #36 (Image)
80. Sword of Damocles #2 (Image)
81. Gamorra Swimsuit Issue (Image)
82. Daredevil #354 (Marvel)
83. Ghost/Hellboy Special #1 (Dark Horse)
84. Spider-Man 2099 #45 (Marvel)
85. Silver Surfer #118 (Marvel)
86. **Glory #12 (Image)**
87. DefCon 4 #4 (Image)
88. Hazard #1 (Image)
89. **Lady Supreme #1 (Image)**
90. Prophet/Chapel: Supersoldiers #1 (Image)
91. Savage Dragon #28 (Image)
92. Artemis: Requiem #2 (DC)
93. Sigma #3 (Image)
94. **Impulse #15 (DC)**
95. Avengelyne/Glory Swimsuit Book (Max.)
96. Aquaman #22 (DC)
97. **Prophet #7 (Image)**
98. Hitman #3 (DC)
99. **Ripclaw #6 (Image)**
100. **Impulse Annual #1 (DC)**

AT THE TOP:

Several surprises fill this month's chart, headed up by Spawn's 50th anniversary issue. Although this big book was $3.95, it not only hit #1 and beat the X-books, but actually walloped everything else in the amount of books sold. Could the story, art and cover by Todd McFarlane, and the anti-hero's new direction, have something to do with it? X-Man continues his popularity rise, soaring over his older counterpart Cable and nearing Wolverine-like interest, all probably thanks to today's young hero trend. *Kingdom Come* is DC's most successful regular book in years, as the enormous hype about the Alex Ross/Mark Waid production overshadowed its $4.95 price (the highest on the chart), and sent fans flying into stores. *Avengers* #400, teaming up every Avenger for the team's possibly last adventure, scored 30 spots higher than last month. Media crossover comics *The X-Files* #0, adapting the megapopular TV show's first episode, and *Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire*, featuring a major new chapter in the sci-fi epic, both fared extremely well.

IN THE MIDDLE:

The double-sized *Thor* gave Marvel its first 500th issue and high order numbers (up 24 from April), as readers jumped onto the hero's major battle in Asgard. Now that it's at Full Bleed Studios, *Pitt* is racking up high sales, beating out most of the Bat-books and all the Supertitles. The entertainingly different *Batman Black and White* continues to do well as it gives creators new expressive freedom, while Batman and Superman's annuals each came in higher than all of last month's DC annual pack.

IN THE SECOND HALF:

Event's latest *Ash* push—with the brand-new title *The Fire Within*—pulled in loads of new readers and the hero's highest order scores in months. Looks like many teen hero fans gave *Atomik Angels*, Crusade's first team book, a try. Catwoman's annual (co-starring Batman in an "Elseworlds"-type story) leapt over both Green Lantern and Supergirl's annual rankings from last month. While writing by Terry Moore (*Strangers in Paradise*) boosted *Lady Supreme*'s sales, two other Extreme titles—*Glory* and *Prophet*—and Top Cow's *Ripclaw* have been slipping and need a new market thrust. *Impulse* hustled in with two books this month—people are slowly hopping onto his title.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the *Wizard* Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

Top 100 Coordinator
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
or e-mail us at: WizardTGTC@aol.com

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COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

HEY! YO, FANBOY! Do you have more free hours than dates with the opposite sex? Well, we've got something for you. Read these here questions and answer them. If you do well, go and brag to your equally dateless friends about your amazing comic book knowledge. If you do poorly, go and join a monastery.

REMEMBER ALL THAT COOL STUFF YOU USED TO BE ABLE TO GET IN THE INSIDE BACK PAGE OF COMICS BEFORE THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU DECIDED TO CRACK DOWN ON ALL THAT FRAUDULENT ADVERTISING? WELL, WE'RE GRADING YOUR MNEMONIC PROWESS AGAINST THESE "AMAZING" PRODUCTS. THE ANSWERS'RE IN THIS MONTH'S "BULLPEN."

SCORE	RANK
0-4	**Pet Squirrel Monkeys.** If they make it to you alive, these adorable monkeys come with a free leash, free cage and free parasites.
5-14	**Hypno-Coin.** Hypnotize your friends into believing that you were an idiot for wasting money and postage on this crap. It's easy!
15-19	**X-ray Specs.** Just what every pre-pubescent boy needs: a new reason to stare at the chests of female passersby.
20	**Polaris Nuclear Submarine.** Seats two and fires real missiles! However, this product was banned in 1972 as a result of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT).

1. Which X-Men member was recently imprisoned and secretly replaced by his alternate reality counterpart from the "Age of Apocalypse" storyline?
A) Beast
B) Cyclops
C) Wolverine (Or did they just take his nose?)
D) Gambit

2. Which of the following is not on display within the bowels of the Batcave?
A) a giant Joker playing card
B) a lifelike Robin animated decoy
C) a giant penny
D) a robot dinosaur

3. Where did Captain America go after he was exiled from the United States?
A) Canada
B) Africa
C) Brazil
D) England

4. Where did sword-swinging Shi's scholarly parents first meet?
A) UCLA; they were both students
B) Oxford; they were both Rhodes scholars
C) Osaka University; they were both Japanese
D) Berlin Polytechnic; they were Cold War spies

5. What superpower does busty Broadway Comics bad girl Fatale have?
A) She has the ability to increase her speed, along with telepathic powers.
B) She can absorb a person's strength and knowledge just by touching them.
C) She can amplify a person's negative emotions and drive them temporarily insane.
D) Her upper torso can defy gravity.

6. Where did Spider-Man get that crazy living costume that is now worn by Eddie Brock, a.k.a. Venom?
A) Reed Richards created the costume with organic unstable molecules that were then reanimated when Spider-Man fought voodoo zombie master Black Talon.
B) While fighting in the Secret Wars on the Beyonder's planet, Spidey got a few holes and runs in his tights, so he grabbed what he thought was a costume and started wearing it.
C) In a battle with Cloak and Dagger, Spidey was enveloped by Cloak's robe of darkness, and when he emerged, he was wearing the living costume.
D) While shopping at a local Kmart, a blue light special triggered Spidey's Consumer-Sense, causing Peter Parker to purchase the living costume at an incredible 40 percent off the regular price.

7. What did God do to Madman when the latter nearly died as a result of fighting Factor Max?
A) He greeted Madman at the Pearly Gates and offered him a beer.
B) He gave Madman a choice of either going into "the Light" or getting a new Pez dispenser, and Madman chose the Pez dispenser.
C) He ignored the curious Madman because it was not yet his time.
D) He flicked Madman back to the Dark Horse reality with his right index finger, much like one would do with a large, juicy booger.

8. Who is known as "The Last Boy on Earth" in the DC Universe?
A) M'Onel
B) Kamandi
C) Omac
D) Macaulay Culkin ("Home Alone III"?)

9. In Areala the Warrior Nun's comic, what released the evil Lord Akuma and Queen Jade from their thousand-year imprisonment?
A) Dr. Ottoman's Teutonic Knight satellites
B) the evil human-headed Oni demons
C) the atomic bomb at Hiroshima
D) the Obsidian Pyramid of Isis

10. Which three X-Men boarded a train filled with mutated humans, hoping to stop it before it entered New York?
A) Bishop, Gambit and Beast
B) Cyclops, Jean Grey and Rogue
C) Iceman, Archangel and Psylocke
D) Dazzler, Cannonball and Lockheed (good luck, New York)

11. Now that there is only one true Green Lantern, what did Alan Scott change his name to?
A) Parallax
B) Sentinel
C) Dark Star
D) Theyshouldhavejustkilledmeoffandbedonewithit-Man.

12. Which parent of a Gen13 member is known to still be alive?
A) John Lynch
B) Philip Chang
C) Michael Cray
D) Alexander Fairchild

13. To stop the evil plans of the Dragon Lady, what government-sponsored group did Superboy have to join?
A) Force of July
B) Suicide Squad
C) Justice League America
D) The Bloodhound Gang

14. What shocking discovery did the WildC.A.T.s make when the team arrived on the planet Khera?
A) The war they had been fighting against the Daemonites ended 200 years ago.
B) Zealot and Maul are also androids like Spartan.
C) Emp is really Voodoo's father.
D) Khera is planning an all-out assault on the planet Earth by destroying the sun.

15. Who found the cure for the Apocalypse Virus?
A) Batman
B) Nightwing
C) Azrael
D) The Joker

16. When the gray Hulk worked for the "gambling community" in Las Vegas, what name did he go by?
A) the Enforcer
B) Muscles
C) Mr. Fixit
D) the Maestro

17. What is the name of Springfield's minor league baseball team, which Homer Simpson was a mascot for?
A) the Atom-Smashers
B) the Protons
C) the Gamma Rays
D) the Isotopes

18. Who was the superhero from Canada who fought the Axis powers during World War II in the Marvel Universe?
A) Yukon Jack
B) Captain Canuck
C) Major Maple Leaf
D) Mr. Quasi-French

19. Who are the three agents Dr. Strangefate uses when he needs help fighting evil?
A) Skulk, Mariner and the Silver Lantern
B) Night Spectre, Speed Demon and Ghost Rider
C) Skulk, Jade Nova and the White Witch
D) Angelhawk, Captain Miracle and Giant Phantom

20. What is the relationship between Ocean Master and Aquaman?
A) Ocean Master is Aquaman's brother.
B) Ocean Master is Aquaman's evil father, bent on getting his kingdom back at all costs.
C) Ocean Master was Aquaman's best friend until Ocean Master was driven insane by toxic waste dumped into the ocean.
D) Ocean Master and Aquaman belonged to the same college fraternity, but OM became a maniac after Aquaman swatted him too hard in the arse with a paddle during his initiation. W

SOUND BITES

"NOW THERE'S SO MUCH IMAGE PRODUCT OUT THERE THAT IT'S CAUGHT UP TO US. WE'VE CREATED OUR OWN COMPETITION."
—*Tony Lobito, Image Comics (Wizard #25, September 1993)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

WIZARD'S comic-crammed crossword puzzle

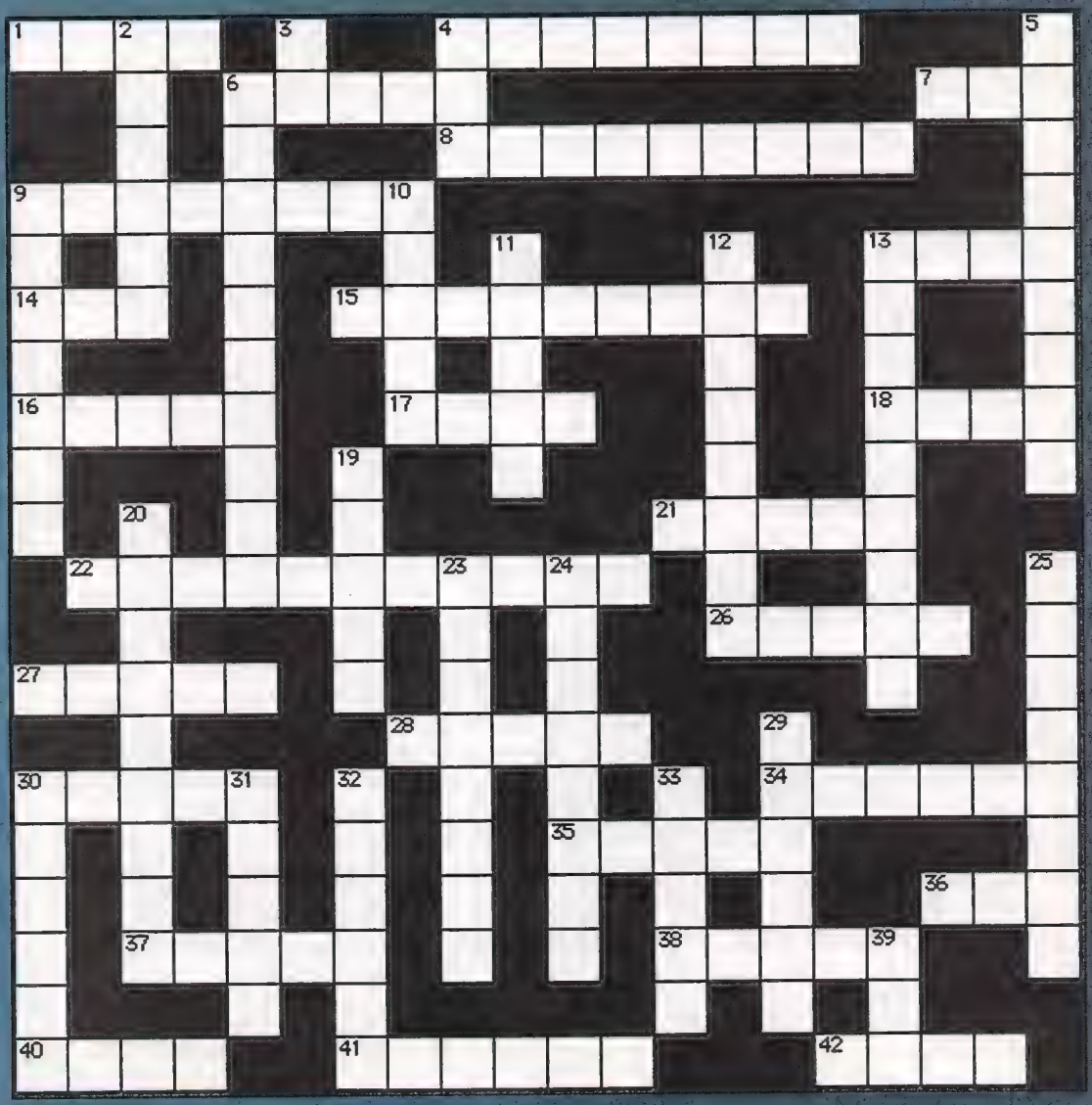
Test your comic book knowledge in our very own homemade crossword puzzle! The answers can be found in this month's "Bullpen."

Across

1. Knight, dragon or stone
4. Selina Kyle
6. TMNT munchie
7. Jacob Marlowe
8. Guardian jewelry
9. Helena Bertinelli
13. Aunt May's current state
14. Stan or Jim
15. Tatooine spaceport locale
16. Superman's changing room
17. Rockers that fought Dr. Doom
18. Big WildC.A.T.
21. Sound of Wolverine's claw
22. Wonder Woman's turf
26. Rusty Collins' girlfriend
27. Zealot's homeworld
28. Bought out Stark International
30. Dr. Delirium's experiment
34. Warrior Nun
35. Arrow, Lantern or Goblin
36. Simpson neighbor; ___ Flanders
37. Gen[13] mentor
38. Dinosaur Hunter
40. ____ Fury
41. Mike Grell's Cat
42. Rann's protector; ____ Strange

Down

2. Thing color
3. __ Joe
4. Shield-Slinger
5. Bouncing New Warrior
6. "Great Caesar's Ghost!"
9. Mignola's paranormal investigator
10. "Star Trek" science officer
11. "Oh, my stars and garters!"
12. Eternals' enemies
13. Latverian capital
19. "Deep Space Nine" Ferengi
20. Man without fear
23. Juggernaut's gem
24. Hawkman's home planet
25. Mr. Miracle's squeeze
29. Malibu sorceress
30. _____ Nicieza
31. Peter Parker clone
32. Aquatic Elemental
33. Sabretooth's sharp weapons
39. Two-Gun, Rawhide or Cisco



CHARACTER PROFILE: Aquaman

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

REAL NAME: Orin (a.k.a. Arthur Curry Jr., although he no longer uses this alias)
AGE: around 30
HEIGHT: 6'1"
WEIGHT: 325 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: Blond
EYE COLOR: Aqua-blue
FIRST APPEARANCE: (original version) *More Fun Comics #73* in 1941; (modern version) *Aquaman: Time and Tide #1* in 1993
TITLE CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *Aquaman* (and coming this fall: *Justice League of America*)
MAJOR ENEMIES: Ocean Master, Charybdis, Manta, Kordax

ORIGIN

Son of the centuries-old Atlantean wizard Atlan and the Atlantean queen Atlanna, Orin was abandoned and left to die due to the Atlantean belief that his blond hair was the sign of a fearsome curse. Surviving exposure to air that would kill a normal Atlantean, baby Orin was rescued by the dolphin Porm, and raised as a member of Porm's pod.

Growing to childhood with the dolphins, Orin eventually left after he inadvertently caused the death of his dolphin "brother." Orin was then found by Arthur Curry, a widowed lighthouse keeper, and adopted the name Arthur Curry Jr. Curry told Orin that he was his own son, and his mother, a mermaid, had abandoned him. Believing himself to be half-human, Orin lived with humans for a time until his foster father abandoned him, leaving him alone again.

Orin retreated to the sea, and had many adventures, including romancing an Eskimo girl named Kako, becoming enemies with Triton (the son of Poseidon) and meeting the Amazon known as Diana, who would one day become Wonder Woman. Most of his adventures ended with Orin increasingly mistrusting inhabitants of the surface world. As a young man, Orin later encountered the Flash, who encouraged him to visit the surface world once again and join Earth's growing community of superbeings.

Despite some setbacks, Orin did eventually join the ranks of Earth's superheroes, both solo and as a founder of the original Justice League of America, and adopted the public name of Aquaman.

As one of Earth's superheroes, Orin eventually found his way home to the Atlantean city of Poseidonis, where he reigned as king for many years. During his reign, he married Mera, an aquatic visitor from the world of the Dark Gods, and had a child named Artie Jr. who was killed by Manta.

After the close of his reign, Mera left Orin, spurring him on to search for a deeper meaning to his life. He discovered the "Atlantis Chronicles," which outlined the magic-filled history of Atlantis, his true history, and his fate to ever be at battle with his brother, the Ocean Master, for the control of Atlantis. This realization caused him to become withdrawn and somewhat more intense in his outlook on life.

In his adventures since this revelation, Orin has lost his left hand to a group of piranha during a battle with Charybdis, and has replaced the hand with a cybernetic hook that responds to his mental commands. The mysterious heroine Dolphin has joined Orin in his travels, and the two have become lovers.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Recently, Orin has learned that he has a son named Koryak by the Eskimo woman, Kako. Orin took Koryak with him to Poseidonis, where the young man was hailed as a new leader for the people.

During this visit to Poseidonis, Mera returned with a mysterious blond-haired boy (Perhaps Orin's son born in the other realm?), but was soon pulled back to the world of the Dark Gods by Thanatos, an evil duplicate of Orin. Following Mera, Orin and Dolphin entered Mera's home dimension, which ultimately allowed Thanatos to escape to the real world, where he was quickly killed by the machinations of Major Disaster.

Upon Orin's return to our world, he learned the true history of Atlantis, and became bound with a cyber-organic entity beneath Poseidonis, which recently caused the sunken city of Poseidonis to rise to the ocean's surface. Fearing the worst, the city's inhabitants fled, leaving Orin as monarch of an empty city.

Thanks to the entity beneath the city, Orin has realized that the Atlanteans are actually alien-human crossbreeds, the result of an alien colonization that occurred millennia ago. This entity also made him aware of his destiny to unite the five lost cities of Atlantis in order to rebuff alien conquerors who have since destroyed Atlantis' extraterrestrial forefathers and have now set their sights on Earth.

SOUND BITES

"MY SECRET FANTASY IS THAT STEPHEN HAWKING WOULD READ THIS AND SAY, 'NOT BAD.'"
—*Jim Shooter on Defiant Comics'* Warriors of Plasm (Wizard #24, August 1993)

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

"Issue #24 [in July] is our version of the film 'Independence Day,' " says *Aquaman* editor Kevin Dooley. "Aquaman and a few of his friends fight back [against] a full-scale alien invasion. After that, the new nation of Unified Atlantis decides to crown Aquaman as their king, but he's not too sure about that, because he's been there and done that before."

Dooley also hints of some political trouble in Aquaman's future. "We haven't quite decided yet, but Atlantis may declare war on Japan. It won't be Japan-bashing. We just want to make people aware of how this country treats the oceans," Dooley says.

Other plans include the hero-formerly-known-as-Aqualad mini-series titled *Tempest: Prophets and Kings*, written and drawn by Phil Jimenez, and an *Aquaman* crossover with DC's fall event, *Darkest Night*.

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

Itching to get your feet wet in Aquaman's world? Editor Kevin Dooley recommends the following issues:

- ***Aquaman* #2**—The loss of Aquaman's hand. "It was so surprising at the end," Dooley says. "Nobody saw it coming."
- ***Aquaman* #3**—Guest-starring Superboy. "The way that Aquaman defeated Superboy was really quite innovative. It's too bad SB never saw the tidal wave coming," Dooley laments.
- ***Aquaman* #4**—The obligatory Lobo guest shot. "A lot of people objected to Aquaman going up against Lobo, but I thought it was a very cool story about dolphins…and frag," Dooley says.
- ***Aquaman* #14**—The "Underworld Unleashed" crossover issue. "The story featured a newly 'amped' Major Disaster, and Peter [David, *Aquaman* writer] handled his new powers really well in a very cool story," Dooley says.

Wizard recommends:

- ***Aquaman* #16**—Aquaman single-handedly takes out the Justice League!

SIMILAR TASTES

If you like *Aquaman*, Dooley suggests the following books: *Impulse*, *Wonder Woman* and *Flash*. "They're all books that mix action and adventure with a light touch of humor, and a couple of running gags." W

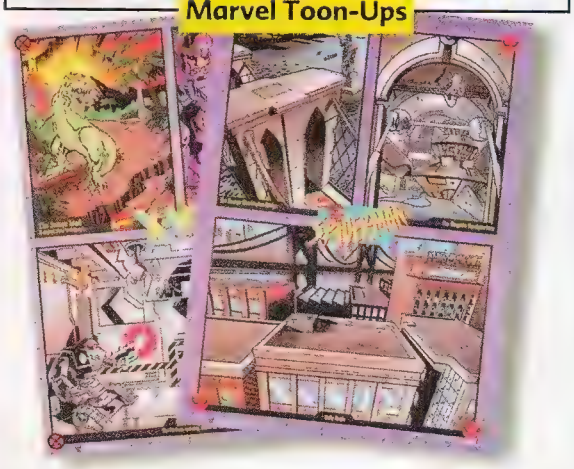
Raised by dolphins himself, when he's not writing, Matthew Brady enjoys jumping through a hoop and eating a live halibut now and then.

JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything that we couldn't stretch into a full-page newsy thing

by David Borak and the *Wizard* staff

Marvel Toon-Ups



STICK IT TO THE MAN

Tired of those posters just sittin' on your wall doing nothing? Well, tire no more, 'cause yer buddies at Marvel are now offerin' you Toon-Ups: giant, interactive action mats for your wall, complete with static-cling stick-on characters. (Basically, Colorforms for your wall!) Spider-Man and X-Men Toon-Ups are currently available in stores for $7.99 each and...wait a minute. Is that how Spidey sticks to walls? Static-cling?! Y'mean all Doc Ock hadda do was toss some fabric softener at Spidey and he woulda dropped like a fly? Sheesh! Each Toon-Up set comes with lots of removable characters and different panels on a 22"-by-28" mat that can be hung anywhere.

HEY, BUB—TURN THE PAGE!

Ya ever read an issue of *X-Men* and you coulda sworn ya heard Wolverine's claws go "SNIKT"? Well, pretend no more! Futech and Marvel have teamed-up to bring you two X-Men "Talking Pages" electronic comic books. While reading 'em, you're prompted at key points in the story to press certain buttons which create sound effects or dialogue that enhance your comic book experience! *X-Men: Magneto's Master Plan* and *X-Men: Scourge of the Savage Land* allow you to read a comic as you've never read one before. They're available now with a suggested retail price of $9.95-$12.95.

FROM X-RAY TO X-MEN VISION

Sittin' in class getting bored again? Then just slip on a pair of Polaroid's new holographic sunglasses and watch the action begin. No, you can't see through your teacher's clothes, but these wild new glasses allow an assortment of comic characters to virtually leap from the lenses using Krypton Laser 3-D Phantagrams. For a mere $20 apiece, you can buy a pair of these holographic sunglasses depicting Spider-Man vs. Venom, Spider-Man vs. Doc Ock, the X-Men vs. Apocalypse, and the X- Men vs. Juggernaut, to name a few. In addition, Polaroid is using this hologram technology to produce stickers featuring Marvel superheroes and that kooky green-faced freak, the Mask, retailing for $3-$5. Look for them at a store near you or contact Polaroid directly at 1-800-343-5000.

MAXX-IMUM FLUX

Straight from MTV, Sony Music Video presents the leather-clad heroine Aeon Flux and everyone's favorite massive, purple superhero the Maxx on home video. Aeon Flux, created by Peter Chung, is a special agent in a cyberpunk world. There's plenty of death, confusion (lots of it!), *awesome* animation and bizarre characters and scenes in this two-hour feature-length video, which includes the complete original shorts from "Liquid Television" and four full-length episodes. Sam Kieth's the Maxx may have made his animated debut on MTV's "Oddities," but now you can own the first 13

Holographic Sunglasses

SOUND BITES

"...I DO HATE LOBO...LOBO WAS CREATED AS AN INDICTMENT OF THE SORT OF MINDLESSLY VIOLENT CHARACTERS YOU FIND IN TOO MANY COMICS, AND INSTEAD, HE BECAME A ROLE MODEL FOR THEM."
—*Keith Giffen, proud papa (Wizard #42, February 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

The Maxx Home Video

episodes in the two-hour video "The Maxx: The Original Series." You'll find plenty of humor, purpleness, cool animation and action-packed scenes in this puppy, which is a pretty good adaptation of the funky Image comic series. Both "Aeon Flux" and "The Maxx" are currently available for $14.98 apiece.

THAT'S A BIG STATUE!

Actually, it's a Big Guy statue (and his pal Rusty the Boy Robot, of course). Now you can own a cold-cast resin statue of Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's Tokyo-saving team. The Big Guy's a mighty 12-inches high, while his li'l buddy's all of 3 1/2 inches tall. Shipping in August from Dark Horse, this fully assembled, unpainted (though paintin' instructions are included!) statue will cost you $150.

NO MORE MONKEYING AROUND

If ya liked the movie "12 Monkeys" (and if ya didn't, you suck), then you might want to get yer paws on some cool new 12 Monkeys merchandise from Kitchen Sink Press. There's two T-shirts featuring the logo from this Oscar-nominated film and a 12 Monkeys cap. Okay, that's kinda cool. But the reaaaalllly cool thing is the neato thermal-ink mug which showcases 12 monkeys running around a clock. Just add hot water and a screaming monkey joins them, completing the logo. Each of these items, available in July, goes for about 16 bucks.

Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot Statue

COLLECTING DAIRY PRODUCTS

Milk and Cheese *trading cards*?! Yeah, yeah. We know Joyce Steel should be covering this over in "Card Market," but these cards're so cool we had to steal 'em for ourselves in "Junk Drawer." This 50-card set, put out by 21st Century Archive, is chock-full of all-new original Evan Dorkin art starring Milk and Cheese! Watch your favorite dairy products go bowling, raise hell, ice skate (Yeowch!), drink, vomit, drink, fight, drink, you get the picture. The backs of these cards, beside containing some hysterical editorial, include 17 new drawings *and* an original nine-panel strip! You can buy these cards as a complete set (which should run you in the $15 ballpark) or in eight-card packs (around $1.50 or so). Colored by Sarah Dyer, this set's a real hoot-and-a-half. Hell, it's a hoot-and-two-thirds! Look for it at your local comic shop or contact 21st Century Archives at 1-800-503-0014.

TOSS ONE BACK WITH LADY DEATH

Chaos! Comics and Graphitti Designs have tag-teamed to bring you the Chaos! Comics Shot Glass Set. You heard right! These three black shot glasses feature Lady Death, Evil Ernie and the Chaos! logo in full-color images on 2 1/2" glasses and are bound to make drinking fun again. But...uh...of course we're only talkin' about shots of Rock-a-dile Red Kool-Aid, right? The set of three glasses will run ya $19.95. Also from Chaos!, look for the Lady Death tank-top featuring art by Jim Balent. A mere $16.95 will get ya this shirt, and let you show plenty o' skin. Just don't forget the sunscreen, okay?

HEY! Are you a company putting out some really nifty comic-related merchandise like Spawn tennis balls, Star Wars hubcaps or even a Superman stapler? Well, we'd love to run it in our groovy Junk Drawer section. (Of course, we'd also like sculptures, novels, T-shirts, games, magnets, buttons, etc.) Please send any info to:

Junk Drawer
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

JUNK DRAWER video games

by Marc Shapiro

Special E³ Report

The Electronic Entertainment Expo—or E³ as we like to call it—is to video games what the San Diego Comic Con is to comics. In other words, it's "The Show." More than 400 companies trotted out over 1,700 new titles last May at the Los Angeles Convention Center amid an atmosphere that was literally the circus on steroids.

Huge screens, set in ultra-cool, bigger-than-life company exhibits, pumped out non-stop games, while hard rock and heavy metal music blasted any and all ear drums within striking distance. Scantily clad women walked the floors, handing out favors (promos that is), while business cards changed hands and deals were made. Guests as diverse as hall-of-fame football players Terry Bradshaw and Franco Harris (pushing their sports/entertainment-related games), and veteran rocker Alice Cooper (who provides the voice for the evil Overlord in Atlantean's *The Lords of Tantrazz*) mixed and mingled with both sharks in business suits and real folks in rock T-shirts and jeans. Love those nose rings!

E³ was a gamer's paradise. So much to play with. So much to look forward to. But before you start drowning in your own drool, here's a rundown of some of the neatest video games ready to spring full-blown from the comic book world.

Turok: Dinosaur Hunter

ACCLAIM

Title: **The Crow: City of Angels**
Shipping: **Christmas**
Availability: **Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation, Windows 95**
The Skinny: Based on August's "Crow" film, Ashe is on a mission of vengeance that takes this latest incarnation of the Crow mythology through five gameplay scenarios, featuring hundreds of rooms and challenges. The buzz here is an advanced 3-D fighting engine that gives players the opportunity to battle up to four villains simultaneously. Also at your disposal are more than 50 martial arts techniques using Acclaim's motion-capture techniques and a raging alternative music soundtrack.

Title: **Magic: The Gathering**
Shipping: **Pending**
Availability: **Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, Windows 95**
The Skinny: After like a gazillion delays from MicroProse, Acclaim has snagged the rights to produce this game based on Wizard of the Coast's collectible card game. While still a ways off from release, you'll be able to play a real-time game of strategic combat featuring *Magic*'s trademark creatures and spells, and your characters will virtually come to life courtesy of 3-D animation. Network, modem and serial duels will let up to four players compete, and you can save your decks and bring 'em over to a friend's house for some serious butt-kicking.

Title: **Turok: Dinosaur Hunter**
Shipping: **September**
Availability: **Nintendo 64**
The Skinny: It's Turok vs. the Campaigner and his army of bionic dinosaurs. And guess what? The fate of the universe is at stake! This cutting-edge adventure (kicking off the Nintendo 64's debut) features first-person perspective, non-linear action and a whole range of weapons, fighting beasts and incredible 3-D graphics. Nine levels of gameplay meet where the past and future collide!

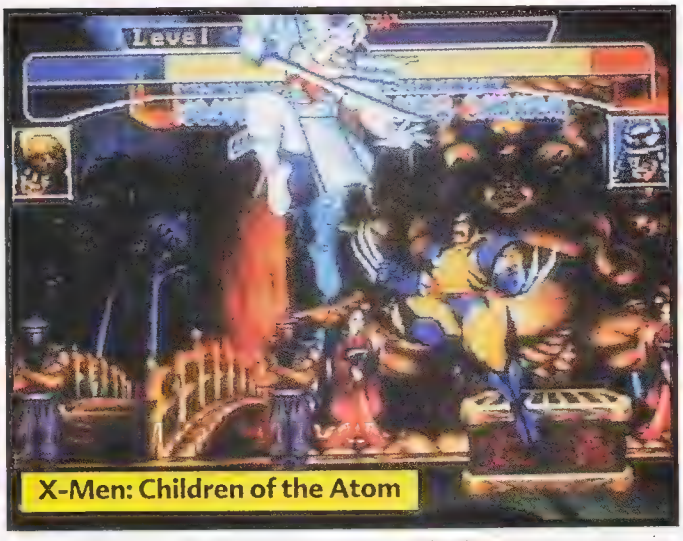
Title: **X-Men: Children of the Atom**
Shipping: **August**
Availability: **Sega Saturn, Sony PlayStation, Super Nintendo**
The Skinny: The popular arcade game comes to your house as your favorite X-Men duke it out in this *Street Fighter*-type

SOUND BITES

"A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE THIS CONCEPT ABOUT BRITISH COMICS WRITERS THAT WHAT THEY ALWAYS DO IS TRAMPLE OVER THE SACRED GROUND AND TAKE THESE GRAND OLD CHARACTERS AND TURN THEM INSIDE OUT."
—Starman *writer James Robinson (Wizard #43, March 1995)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years.

game. At your beck and call are Iceman, Rogue, Magneto, Omega Red, Psylocke, Silver Samurai, Cyclops, Storm, Colossus and Spiral. Featuring the actual voices of the actors from the "X-Men" animated series, you'll get to pit your favorite mutants against each other in an all-out brawl.



X-Men: Children of the Atom

BRIGHTER CHILD

Title: **Amazing Math**
Shipping: **Summer**
Availability: **Mac, Windows CD-ROM**
The Skinny: Spider-Man, Iron Man, She-Hulk, Wolverine and other Marvel crimefighters teach mathematics to children ages 8-12 while battling the likes of the Hobgoblin, Titanium Man, the Terrible Toad Men and the Sentinels. The first of a regular series of Marvel-themed educational games from Brighter Child.

CAPCOM

Title: **Marvel Super Heroes**
Shipping: **Late '96**
Availability: **Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn**
The Skinny: Marvel good guys battle classic evildoers one on one in this struggle that features the likes of Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk, Captain America, Wolverine, Juggernaut, Magneto, Blackheart and, of course, Dr. Doom. If you happen to make it past Doom, then it's up against Thanos with the insanely powerful Infinity Guantlet on the line! This juiced-up, awesome-lookin' game's got some pretty neat features to it. Besides a life recovery feature, players can obtain an Infinity Gem, and with it, perform six new super moves.

Title: **Marvel Super Heroes in War of the Gems**
Shipping: **Summer**
Availability: **Super Nintendo**
The Skinny: The universe will either survive or burn in this titanic struggle that pits the forces of good (Spider-Man, the Incredible Hulk, Captain America, Iron Man and Wolverine) against the guardians of evil (Dr. Doom, Thanos, Blackheart and the Brood), in a hunt for the Infinity Gems. This single player side-scroller lets you control each of the five heroes in separate missions as you fight to save the universe.

Marvel Super Heroes in War of the Gems

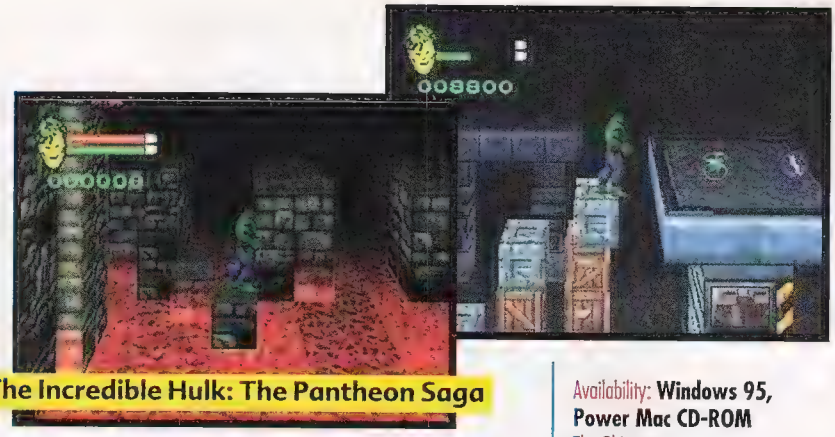
CLOUD 9

Title: **How to Draw the Marvel Way**
Shipping: **October**
Availability: **Mac, Windows CD-ROM**
The Skinny: Featuring the voice-over of Stan Lee, *How to Draw the Marvel Way* teaches children in the 8-12 age group how to draw Spider-Man, the Fantastic Four, the Hulk, the X-Men and other classic Marvel characters. Lessons are completed on your computer screen and the final results can be printed out. The first in a projected series of educational Marvel adventures from Cloud 9.

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

Title: **The Incredible Hulk: The Pantheon Saga**
Shipping: **October**
Availability: **PC CD-ROM, Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn**
The Skinny: It certainly ain't

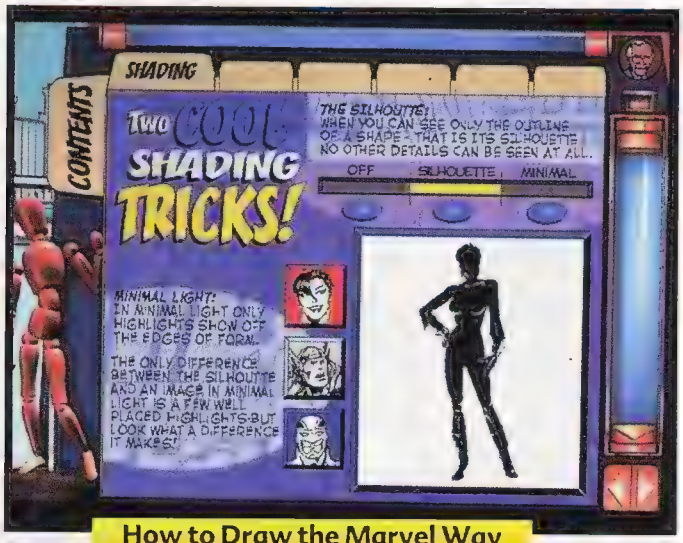
easy bein' green in this two-tiered storyline taken straight from Marvel's own comic pages. In the initial punch-up, the Hulk does battle with the likes of Piecemeal, Atalanta and Agamemnon. After he defeats them and becomes their leader, it's on to story two where hero Hulk meets evil Hulk (a.k.a. the Maestro) in a final battle royal. Total fighting in a 3-D side-scrolling setting with tons of moves, claps and stomps.



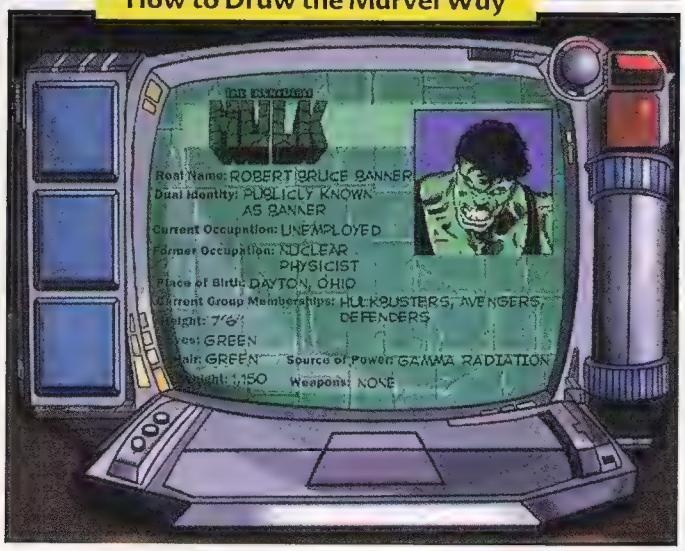
The Incredible Hulk: The Pantheon Saga

FOX INTERACTIVE

Title: **Aliens vs. Predator**
Shipping: **Spring '97**
Availability: **Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, Windows 95 CD-ROM**
The Skinny: You can be an Alien, a Predator or a Colonial Marine in this 3-D tale of monsters on the loose. When a top-secret experiment on the ice planet Varicella 413 is sabotaged, all sorts of alien nasties escape and turn the planet into a slaughterhouse of futuristic gore, chills and thrills. The choice of playing friend or alien foe is up to you. But one thing is certain: It will be one hell of a fight.



How to Draw the Marvel Way



Title: **The Simpsons Cartoon Studio**
Shipping: **August**
Availability: **Mac, Windows CD-ROM**
The Skinny: Create your own episode of "The Simpsons" by manipulating backgrounds, props, sound and voice loops, and hand-drawn animation cells. The possibilities are endless. Just picture it, you can have Ned Flanders and Principal Skinner all greased-up and ready to Jell-O wrestle in front of Bart's entire school. Or make Groundskeeper Willie don a mini-skirt and throw a tea party for Milhouse and Martin. Or feed Grandpa Simpson to a truck full of...

Title: **The Simpsons: Virtual Springfield**
Shipping: **Late '96**
Availability: **Windows 95, Power Mac CD-ROM**
The Skinny: Matt Groening and the voices of the "Simpsons" TV show are involved in this funky virtual tour of the Simpsons' hometown. You can visit such landmark sites as Apu's Kwik-E-Mart, the Burns Executive Washroom and Homer's workplace, Sector 7G. Experience the terror of what's under Bart's bed. Groove on the 3-D interactive images. Soak unknowing victims with water balloons. Be a Simpson. It can't hurt. Well, not too much at least.

Title: **The Tick**
Shipping: **Fall**
Availability: **Windows CD-ROM**
The Skinny: This one's for the small fry (ages 4-8). The Tick, aided by his new partner Arthur, wins a superhero contest and becomes a public protector. He immediately embarks on a series of adventures in which young game players learn puzzle solving skills by helping to organize clues. Wow, fun *and* educational!

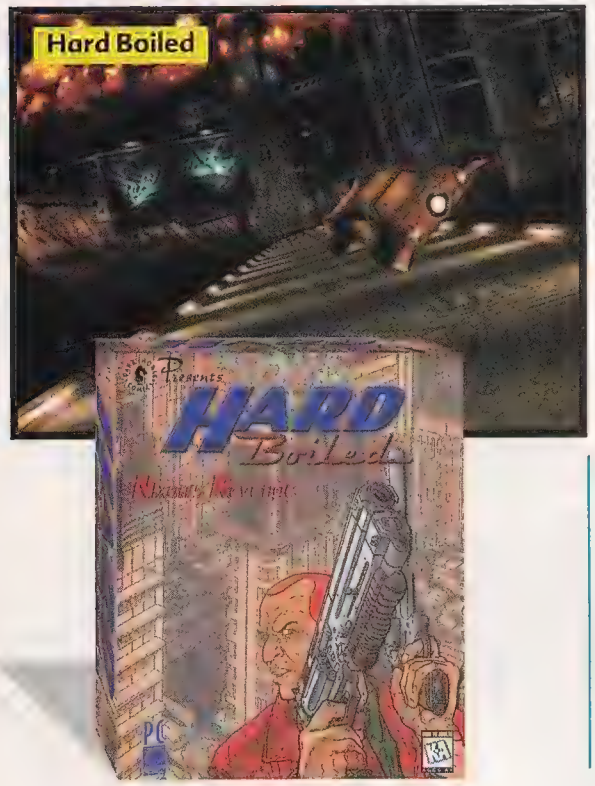
Title: **The Tick**
Shipping: **Late '96**
Availability: **Sega Saturn**
The Skinny: Everybody's favorite blue bug leaps into action in this adult (relatively speaking) adventure in which the Tick and his faithful sidekick Arthur attempt to stop Super Villain from poisoning the city's candy supply. Along the way, you'll have to take on a million zillion ninjas and the evil flora that is El Seed. Be warned, how-

SOUND BITES
"MOST SUPERHERO COMICS TODAY ARE 'THE BIG CHILL' WITH SUPERPOWERS—PEOPLE WHO ARE BETTER-LOOKING THAN YOU, HAVING PROBLEMS YOU WISH YOU HAD, AND THEY CAN BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF YOU FROM ACROSS THE ROOM."
—*Howard Chaykin (Wizard #43, March 1995)*
the best quotes of the last 5 years...

The Simpsons Cartoon Studio

ever, 'cause this ain't your typical video game. Rules are regularly ignored and the game can actually end if the Tick gets bored!

Title: **The X-Files**
Shipping: **1997**
Availability: **Windows 95 CD-ROM, Mac CD-ROM**
The Skinny: This live-action, interactive game comes with the creative blessing of "X-Files" creator Chris Carter and will feature David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprising their roles as Agents Mulder and Scully for the computer screen with all-new original footage. Virtual Cinema, a cutting-edge, interactive process will allow you to search through files, access your favorite agents' computer database and interact with witnesses as you investigate the mirky world of paranormal phenomena. Trust no one. (Except us, of course!)



GTE ENTERTAINMENT

Title: **Hard Boiled**
Shipping: **October**
Availability: **Sega Saturn**
The Skinny: Intense is not the word for this light-speed adaptation of Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's mechanical assassin who was programmed to believe he was just a human tax collector, but discovered he's really a nasty robotic assassin working for an evil freak. A vengeance-seeking Nixon blasts his way through seven levels of gaming hell in a world of full 3-D real-time graphics, multiple branching for a variety of gameplay, and a wide array of weapons. With certain time limits for each level, you've gotta move fast in this action-packed dark journey.

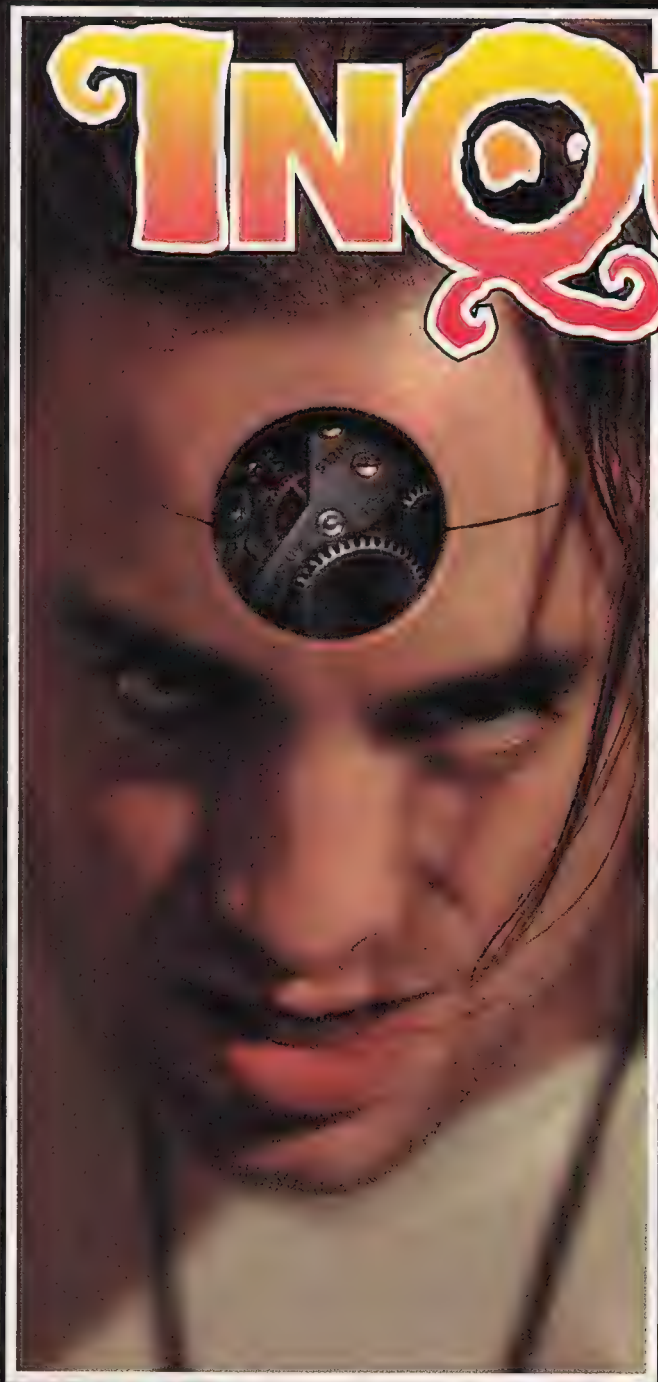
SEGA

Title: **X-Men: Mojo World**
Shipping: **Fall**
Availability: **Sega Genesis**
The Skinny: Classic X-Men are transported through time and space to Mojo World where television is king. Their mission? Take on tough-as-nails television foes in a battle they really can't win. That's 'cause when you play by Mojo's rules, even when you win you lose. He might be in charge, but he ain't all there (if ya know what we mean). Anyways, you'll find plenty o' mutants and big, fat, milky creatures in this action-adventure.

Title: **X-Women: The Sinister Virus**
Shipping: **October**
Availability: **Sega Genesis**
The Skinny: While working on an antidote for the Legacy Virus, Mr. Sinister created a new strain that attacks all male mutants rendering them unconscious and eventually dead. Tough break, guys. What's worse, before he could destroy this new strain, Genesis and the Dark Riders stole it. Now it's up to the X-Women (Rogue, Storm and Phoenix) to track down Genesis and the Dark Riders, recover the virus and discover an antidote before it's too late. Plenty of 3-D graphics, increased frame rates and a whole lot of side-scrolling action join together in complete mutant mayhem.

Inside Anson's Twisted Mind!

INQUEST™ #17



Featuring a step-by-step guide to creating terrorific monsters by Anson Maddocks!

PLUS an exclusive Faeries Killer Deck™ card for *Magic: The Gathering*™ and a Star Trek®: The Original Series card from Fleer/SkyBox!

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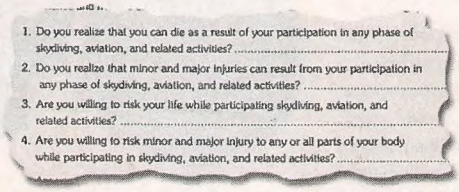
bullpen

DEATH FROM ABOVE

She's insane.

Her name's Liz Almond, she works for *Wizard*'s ad team Full Page and she's two fries short of a Happy Meal. Using what we can only guess was evil salesperson-hypnotism, Liz convinced six not too terribly bright Wizardites (Pat McCallum, Jim McLauchlin, Mike Fasolo, Arlene So, Doug Goldstein and Kate Torpey) to kill themselves. At least that's what we think she wanted. We're not sure what else getting your friends to jump 13,000-plus feet out of an airplane and hurtling towards the earth at 125 mph is good for. Good thing we had parachutes. "Actually, it wasn't bad once I got over the fear, the vertigo, the nausea, the nosebleed and that parachute harness thing that fit a bit too snug around the crotch. Heck, as soon as I find the lower intestine I lost on the way down, I just may try it again," said McLauchlin. Liz herself added, "I just want to give a BIG thanks to all the folks at The Ranch skydiving facilities in New Paltz, N.Y. These guys gave our minds and bodies a complete sensory overload...and returned us back to Earth not quite the same people we were when we left." Liz plans on further testing our bladder control with a white-water rafting trip later in the year. Evil woman.


1. Do you realize that you can die as a result of your participation in any phase of skydiving, aviation, and related activities? .....
2. Do you realize that minor and major injuries can result from your participation in any phase of skydiving, aviation, and related activities? .....
3. Are you willing to risk your life while participating skydiving, aviation, and related activities? .....
4. Are you willing to risk minor and major injury to any or all parts of your body while participating in skydiving, aviation, and related activities? .....

Part of the paperwork they gave us to read before the jump. Quite the confidence-builder.

TOP TEN

Top 10 ways "Star Trek" kicks ass over "Star Wars"

10. Nobody open-mouth kisses their sister on the Enterprise.
9. Wedge gets slapped around every movie, but lives. When a red-shirt dies, he stays dead, dammit!
8. Kirk and crew have saved planets; Luke and pals have escaped garbage bins.
7. With the exception of like three Klingons, all the "Trek" aliens speak English.
6. No %#@*ing Ewoks!
5. No one can say "Salt -N- Pepa" like Patrick Stewart.
4. Two things: Yeoman Rand.
3. Star Trek ensigns much tougher to kill than Stormtroopers (even that little wimpy kid from "Return to Space Mountain" in "The Wrath of Khan").
2. Guinan can solve your problems and get you drunk; R2-D2 can show Viewmaster slides.
1. What would you rather hear: "Threepio! Where can he beeeee?" or "You've got Genesis, Khan—but you don't have me. If you want me, you're going to have to come down here. You're going to HAVE...TO COME...DOWN HERE!!"?

MORT OF THE MONTH

DETECTIVE CHIMP

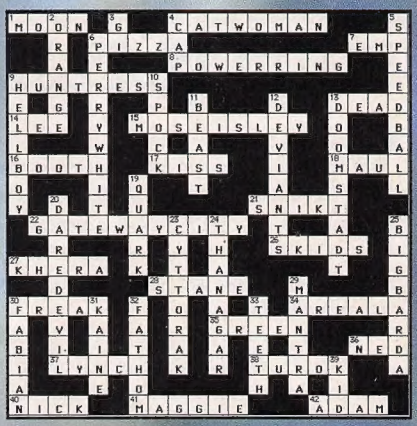
First Appearance: ***The Adventures of Rex the Wonder Dog #4*** **(DC Comics)**

A monkey? I'm not sure what's worse here: the fact that a "Detective Chimp" exists or that under his secret identity, it reads...Bobo. Dear God, this is worse than those Liefeld Captain America sketches. Anyway, what's Detective Chimp's deal? Let's make this quick...Sheriff Chase adopted Bobo when his first human "parent" was murdered and made him his unofficial assistant, and he solved case after case until old age slowed him down, until he and pal Rex the Wonder Dog drank from the Fountain of Youth, which reverted him to a young and bouncy monkey again. End of story.

MORT-O-METER:

CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS

from page 233



CONTEST WINNER

Brian A. Garber, of Kent, Ohio, is the winner of issue #54's DC/Marvel Crossover Contest, with his cool combo of Nightwing and Gambit!

C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

from page 232

1. A	6. B	11. B	16. C
2. B	7. D	12. D	17. D
3. D	8. B	13. B	18. C
4. A	9. C	14. A	19. C
5. B	10. D	15. C	20. A

WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

TODD McFARLANE

You'd be hard-pressed to find a creator in the comics industry that has had more of an impact on it during the past five years than Todd McFarlane. From co-founding Image to drawing a consistent Top 10 comic book since 1989, McFarlane seems to have the Midas touch.

But for all the fame and fortune that McFarlane has amassed, the creator of Spawn and popular Spider-Man artist actually thinks of himself as "a really simplistic guy.

"I go and run this empire and then at 5 o'clock I've got nothing left," reflects the 35-year-old McFarlane in his trademark tough-guy voice. "I don't listen to much music and I don't watch much TV. I just play sports, bounce my kid, kiss my wife, call it a day and then start it all over again."

And while McFarlane is quite happy with the success the madness has brought him, he admits to being "much more tame and less outspoken than I used to be" and continues to riff on the fact that life at the top "is still quite hectic.

"I have no habits anymore. The time just isn't there anymore. All there's time for is my family, sleep and running the business."

Todd McFarlane, born and raised in Calgary, Canada, recalls his childhood as being a reflection of what he would become as an adult. "As stupid as it sounds, I was pretty much the same kid as I am today. I was an egomaniac when I was five years old. I liked to torment people. I started early in learning how to get the upper hand and how to push people's buttons."

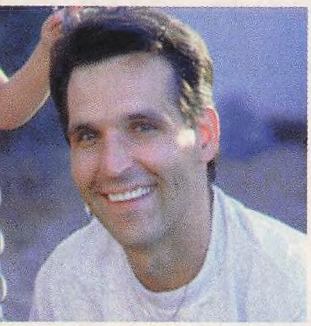


Photo courtesy of Jim McHugh

His emerging ego hit overload at age 18 when, after a year of serious comic book collecting, he decided to walk the walk. "I thought, 'I can do better than most of the stuff I'm looking at.' Of course I really couldn't, but my mind said I could."

The "self-taught" McFarlane, following higher education at Eastern Washington University and a degree in Graphic Design, began "just pounding it through the mail" in an attempt to crack the comics market. Finally, in 1985, he broke through with a gig on Epic Comics' *Coyote*. DC's *Infinity Inc.* followed and, in 1987, his profile soared with his work on an *Incredible Hulk* run that was highlighted by issue #340 (in which Wolverine guest-starred). Landmark work on *Amazing Spider-Man* and his own title *Spider-Man* expanded the McFarlane influence. His co-creation (with David Michelinie) of Venom, the creation of Spawn and his controversial move in breaking away from the establishment and contributing to the formation of Image cemented his stature. He seemingly struck gold with every step he took.

McFarlane sees his success, reputation and immense influence as being only partially based on any artistic talent. "Some of it has been luck, but I basically think that I've created my own good fortune. I think a lot of my so-called influence stems from the fact that I've always stood up for what I've believed in. If you're getting screwed in life, then move on and stop bitching. I'd rather leave that with a kid than 'This is how you draw Spider-Man.' "

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...
Some Jerry Lewis comic. Whenever we went on drives, my mom and dad would throw comics at me and say, "Here! Shut up!"

Favorite comic of all time...
Detective Comics

Favorite work of your own...
It would have to be the very last thing I did, otherwise I would think I wasn't giving it all I've got.

Superpower you would most want...
The ability to create world peace.

Books you currently read...
Big zip. The only thing I have time to read is *The Hockey News* and the sports page.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Chocolate-covered raisins

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid it was my Hot Wheels. As an adult, my Funny Car.

Things you collect...
Hockey cards, and sports and Hollywood collectibles

Person you would most want to meet...
Hook me up with Jesus Christ.

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Joe Pesci, because he's the only one who could act psycho enough.

Favorite cartoon...
"Rocky and Bullwinkle"

Person you would most like to work with...
Spike Lee

Favorite musical performer...
Tracy Chapman

Favorite TV shows...
"ESPN SportsCenter" and "The Simpsons"

Last good movie you saw...
"Seven"

Last good book you read...
Helter Skelter, by Vincent Bugliosi

If you had the power of The Beyonder...
Once again, world peace. I would just like to be able to say, "Peace be with you, brother," and have it work. W

SOUND BITES

"I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHO THE HELL HE IS THESE DAYS."
—*John Byrne on Wolverine (Wizard #28, December 1993)*

the best quotes of the last 5 years...

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There will be another.

The Crow
city of angels

COMING SOON

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